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HISTORY OF DISSENTERA

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THE
HISTORY OF DISSENTERS,

FROM THE
REVOLUTION TO THE YEAR 1808.

BY
DAVID BOGUE, D.D. AND JAMES BENNETT.

SECOND EDITION.

By JAMES BENNETT, D.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
FREDERICK WESTLEY AND A. H. DAVIS,
10, STATIONERS' COURT, AND AVE-MARIA LANE.

MDCCCXXXIII.

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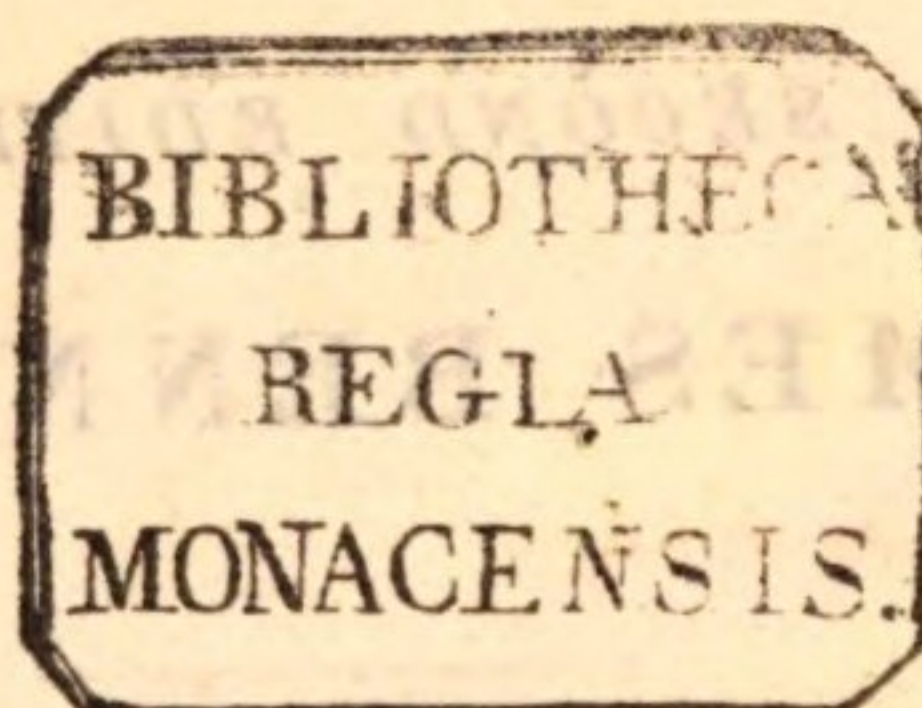
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CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

	Pages
PREFACE	v
Introduction	1— 88
Reasons of Dissent	88—152
Of the Presbyterians	152—165
— Independents	165—182
— Baptists	182—195
— Quakers	195—212
History of Religious Liberty	212—289
Seminaries of the Dissenters	289—352
Outward State of Dissenters	353—400
State of Religion	401—415
Lives of Eminent Dissenters	416—511

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

1	Introduction
1-88	History of the Province
88-132	Geography
132-163	Climate
163-182	Vegetation
182-192	Animals
192-212	Minerals
212-230	Population
230-240	Religion
240-252	Education
252-262	Commerce
262-272	Manufactures
272-282	Transportation
282-292	Public Works
292-302	Public Health
302-312	Public Education
312-322	Public Works
322-332	Public Health
332-342	Public Education
342-352	Public Works
352-362	Public Health
362-372	Public Education
372-382	Public Works
382-392	Public Health
392-402	Public Education
402-412	Public Works
412-422	Public Health
422-432	Public Education
432-442	Public Works
442-452	Public Health
452-462	Public Education
462-472	Public Works
472-482	Public Health
482-492	Public Education
492-502	Public Works
502-512	Public Health
512-522	Public Education
522-532	Public Works
532-542	Public Health
542-552	Public Education
552-562	Public Works
562-572	Public Health
572-582	Public Education
582-592	Public Works
592-602	Public Health
602-612	Public Education
612-622	Public Works
622-632	Public Health
632-642	Public Education
642-652	Public Works
652-662	Public Health
662-672	Public Education
672-682	Public Works
682-692	Public Health
692-702	Public Education
702-712	Public Works
712-722	Public Health
722-732	Public Education
732-742	Public Works
742-752	Public Health
752-762	Public Education
762-772	Public Works
772-782	Public Health
782-792	Public Education
792-802	Public Works
802-812	Public Health
812-822	Public Education
822-832	Public Works
832-842	Public Health
842-852	Public Education
852-862	Public Works
862-872	Public Health
872-882	Public Education
882-892	Public Works
892-902	Public Health
902-912	Public Education
912-922	Public Works
922-932	Public Health
932-942	Public Education
942-952	Public Works
952-962	Public Health
962-972	Public Education
972-982	Public Works
982-992	Public Health
992-1002	Public Education

P R E F A C E.

IF to most readers ecclesiastical is less interesting than civil history, a Christian should attach the highest value to the records of the Church, which is the empire of minds and of religion ; and though a particular section of the Christian pale may appear to Christians in general of inferior moment, those who belong to that section must read its annals with peculiar interest.

To Dissenters themselves, therefore, their own history can need no recommendation. The review of a century and a half of quiet enjoyment of privileges for which their forefathers laboured and struggled, suffered and bled, cannot fail to interest every one who, having adopted their principles, inherits their spirit. Their enemies ventured to predict, that the Non-conformist

churches would die with their founders, or would, if suffered to drag out a sickly life, be productive of nothing but mischief. Time, that great investigator of truth, has pronounced a far different verdict—several generations having now passed away, and the dissenting churches not only existing in full vigour, but in increasing numbers and energy. But the earlier records are beginning to perish, and we are warned to snatch an instructive history from the oblivion with which it is threatened.

To the study of the mere historian the following pages have a strong claim, because they present to view a case which has no parallel in the records of nations. The Protestants of France were something more than a religious dissent. They formed a political party under the guidance of nobles and princes of the blood, defended by armies and entrusted with garrison towns. Nor have they produced on their country that effect which has followed from the existence and exertions of the English Dissenters. In Holland, religious liberty was promptly and generously conceded to those who differed from the established religion, which never formed a body

so splendid and powerful as the national hierarchy of England. The United States of America, indeed, contain myriads who have inherited or adopted the principles of the dissenting churches ; but not having had to contend against the influence of a dominant clergy, it cannot be known how they would have come out from the furnace of such a trial. But here we record the history of those who have, through various fortunes, acquired a legal charter for their religious rights, which they have maintained unrelaxed by the sunshine of prosperity, as they had before been unbroken by the storms of cruel persecution.

To the British patriot our history commends itself, by the consideration that the Dissenters have been confessed, even by those who were hostile to their religious principles, to have been the people who cherished the precious spark of that liberty which forms the glory of our isle. Those who have differed from a dominant religion have usually contended for the liberty of worshipping God according to their own views, because these were assumed to be right ; but the great body of the English Dissenters have long main-

tained, and have at last taught the world to admit, that all who conduct themselves as peaceful subjects of the state have a right to the uncontrolled exercise of their religion, and that the magistrate should neither oppress, nor establish, but simply protect the church.

There are many reasons why the history of Dissenters should be written by themselves. If they are in danger of partialities in favour of their theme, others are equally exposed to hostile prejudices ; and while we may be expected to be better informed, facts have proved that those who view us at a distance are unacquainted with the more minute features and nicer shades of character, which are essential to a faithful portrait. Our very errors may give instruction to the world ; for they will show, by the tinge which our minds have received, the distinguishing colour of the communion to which we belong.

It has, however, been our aim to weigh the men and the actions of all parties in the even balances of truth. Our faith is dictated by no human authority ; we have never sworn, as some others, to be always of our present opinion ; nor are we bound to adhere to any imaginary

standard of perfection, which forbids us to profit by increasing light, or to be wiser than our forefathers. It is our happiness to know that the faults which we have detected in Dissenters, we may publish, with the hope that our fidelity may improve our friends, and rescue them from the just censure of our foes. We have, indeed, undertaken our work, from attachment to the subject, as well as from a conviction that it was an important desideratum in the literature of our country. We have, therefore, not scrupled to animate our pages with the affections of our hearts, as well as to illuminate them with the sentiments of our minds, not affecting a philosophical indifference, which would have argued moral torpor rather than mental dignity. The principles and tempers which form the imperishable essence of religion demand peculiar attention in a history of dissent, which is founded solely on principle, and stands unsupported by pecuniary resources or physical force. We have, therefore, departed as widely from the secularity of Mosheim, who often gives the history of anything but religion, as from the clear frosty light of Camp-

bell, and the good-humoured candour and nonchalance of Jortin.

For the censures we have pronounced on the different bodies of Dissenters, or on the established communion, we must expect to be censured in our turn; for such is the infirmity of human nature, that we fancy we diminish our own faults, or revenge ourselves for offensive reproofs, by retorting on our censors. It had been easy to pay compliments to all parties and expose the faults of none. But where would have been the profit? If history should be philosophy teaching by examples, ought it not to lead men to seek a cure for their faults? If we are blamed by all parties, we shall at least have the consolation of knowing that we have been the flatterers of none.

We cannot, however, admit that censures on the conduct of individuals constitute a sentence of condemnation on the communion to which they belong. No church can be responsible for the actions of every one within its pale. In proportion as any denomination becomes numerous and respectable, it is exposed to the intrusion of hypocrites or self-deceivers, who hope to shelter their own cha-

racters under that of the body, to profit by its friendship, and shine by the lustre of its renown. But then only are the rest of the community dishonoured by the faults of the guilty party, when, from morbid tenderness for their own credit, they attempt to justify the offender, or resent the censures levelled at him, as if aimed at the whole. We have not wished to make the children offenders for their fathers' crimes. Communities change character, as well as the individuals of which they are composed; and sects, which in their origin betrayed puerile follies, or depraved passions, have outgrown their faults, and ripened in wisdom and goodness, as much as in years, till at length their early vices are contrasted, if not expiated, by exalted worth.

The history of an oppressed and persecuted dissent could scarcely have been written by a friend, without the interspersion of severe censures on the dominant church. We have, indeed, not hesitated to brand cruel tyranny with the infamy which it deserves. We have, however, been far from insinuating, either that every member of the Anglican church once burned with the furious lust of domination

which the ruling party displayed, or that none of her clergy have derived any improvement from the lapse of time and the discipline of events. On the contrary, we have the happiness to be acquainted with ministers of the established church, whose enlightened minds, liberal principles, virtuous lives, and benevolent labours, would do honour to any communion of Christians which now exists, and would have reflected no disgrace on the first and purest ages of the church. There are hearts within the established pale, which echo to the severest censures we could pronounce on the arbitrary measures that drove the Puritans to plant churches in the transatlantic deserts, or to pine away in loathsome jails. The beneficed clergyman who wrote the Plea for the Non-conformists declares his full conviction of the truth of Judge Hale's weighty remark, "that the bishops, in silencing so many excellent preachers when there were none to supply their places, punished, not so much the ministers, as their flocks." Of the Dissenters, Jortin says, "*Qui tales sunt utinam essent nostri!*"—Such they are that I wish they belonged to us.

As, however, the love of rule over conscience is not confined to one denomination, but burns and rages wherever selfishness and pride feed the fire, we have had occasion to hold it up to infamy when it has broken out among Dissenters. If, on these occasions, we have indulged in the language of abhorrence, we deem it a sufficient apology to say, that by unnecessary restraints on liberty of thought or speech, and by persecution for conscience sake, the highest honours of the only Sovereign of conscience are invaded, and the dearest interests of the human race endangered. In a state church, there is, indeed, more scope for the exercise of this pernicious spirit, which is therefore often canonized for a virtue ; but persecuting Dissenters are guilty of sinning against their own avowed sentiments, and imitating the rigours of that rule from which they have fled.

It is not improbable, that many of our dissenting readers may be disappointed at not meeting with minute circumstances of local interest, such as the records of a particular church, or the name and virtues of a favourite pastor. But it was our duty to consider what

influence each circumstance, or individual, had upon the whole body, and to choose, amidst a multiplicity of objects, that which had the first claim to prominence, or could afford the most profitable lessons to posterity. We were, therefore, compelled to omit many names which our partialities would have recorded with honour ; because there were others which had still higher claims. At the first and the last of the periods into which our history is divided, we were called to make the most frequent sacrifices to historic proportion. Many of the two thousand ejected ministers, dying before the revolution, did not belong to our province ; and several ministers who have recently entered into their rest, though their names breathe a fresh and sacred fragrance over the scene of their labours, could not have been mentioned, without converting a history into mere biography, or without giving barren catalogues of names and dates, instead of instructive sketches, that might stimulate survivors to “ follow those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” We have, therefore, chosen to promote the edification of all, and to satisfy the just expectations of

the more reflecting part of our readers, even at the risk of disappointing not a few.

Though this second edition has been conducted through the press by the solitary labours of the surviving author, he has been guided by the previous arrangements made with his venerable departed coadjutor and friend. With him it was agreed to compress the work into two volumes, and to improve, in some respects, the arrangement of the materials ; but that which is omitted is almost entirely reflections that had run out into dissertations, or historical passages which did not strictly belong to the records of dissent. The work terminates with the year 1808, when the first edition was published ; for no further could it be said to be a joint production ; but a continuation to the present time is in progress, and will form a volume so arranged, as to render it capable of being appended to the first edition in four volumes, or to the present edition in two.

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HISTORY OF DISSENTERS.

CHAP. I.—INTRODUCTION.

SECT. I.—*Sketch of the History of Christianity in Britain to the Revolution.*

WHILE Britons are employed in benevolent missions to evangelize the distant nations, it is highly interesting to inquire how we ourselves first received the religion of Christ. But the introduction of the Gospel to our isle is enveloped in the darkness of a remote antiquity. We discover, indeed, the gloomy horrors of the long night in which our ancestors wandered, before the beams of divine revelation darted on us from the East. The naked bodies and savage manners of the ancient Britons, which Roman historians have described, were less disgraceful than the besotted minds and depraved hearts that lurked within. Were we to give full credit to the narrative of Cæsar, we should believe that our forefathers maintained a community of wives, elevated but little above the promiscuous intercourse of brutes. The rude lords exercised over their women and children an absolute power of life and death. Prisoners taken in war, or condemned criminals, they enclosed in wicker cages, and burned alive as sacrifices to their gods, or at the funerals of the deceased, to appease their departed spirits. Britain is said to have been the

chief seat of the Druids, who taught the warlike inhabitants to despise death, from the persuasion that their souls would then pass into other bodies *. But enough of a scene where the horrid gloom is interrupted only by the glare of infernal fires, which just serves to make the darkness visible.

Has Infinite Wisdom thrown an impenetrable veil over the introduction of the Gospel into many countries, that we might learn to adore, not the missionary who brings, but the God who sends the blessing? That the benign religion of Jesus was introduced into Britain at a very early period, when nations nearer to Judea had not yet heard the joyful sound, seems probable; but that the thirty-seventh year of Tiberius, or the fourth after the death of Christ, was, as some affirm, the auspicious era, we will not venture to assert. To Peter, James, and Paul, among the Twelve; to Simon Zelotes and Aristobulus, apostolic men, has been given the title of apostle to the British isle, with equal strength of confidence and want of proof †. But the monkish legends assign this honour to Joseph of Arimathea, who was long supposed to have founded the church at Glastonbury, and planted its holy thorn. It is, however, more lately affirmed, that Caractacus, being conquered by the Romans, and carried, with his father Bran or Branus, and his wife and children, captive to Rome, there heard the Gospel. Bran and others of the family became converts to the Christian faith, and on their return, introduced it into their native country. On this account Bran is called one of the three blessed sove-

* Cæsar de Bello Gallico, lib. i.

† Fuller's Church History of Britain, book i.

reigns of Britain, and Cyllin, son of Caractacus, who is supposed to have received the Gospel at this time, is styled St. Cyllin. Eigen, the daughter of Caractacus, is recorded as the first British female saint. This noble family is said to have returned from Rome in the seventieth year of the Christian era, and to have brought over Ilid, a Christian Jew, and Cyndav, a brother, to propagate the Gospel in Britain*. We still, however, leave this question in the uncertainty in which it is likely always to remain; for whoever scattered the first seeds of divine truth in our island, left them to be watered with the dew of heaven, and departed, probably, to find his name in a nobler volume than that of fame.

But why should everything be ascribed to the efforts of one individual? Might not the intercourse maintained between this country and Gaul, by means of the travelling merchants, have brought hither Christians at different periods, who may have contributed to diffuse the Gospel in various parts of our island? Wonders are related of the numbers and dignity of the first Christian converts. The Claudia, mentioned by Paul †, is said to have been a British Christian, wife to Pudens, a Roman senator; but this, if true, proves nothing concerning the history of religion in Britain, as she might have believed on Christ by hearing his gospel at Rome.

The second century of the Christian era furnishes no materials for the religious history of our country, except the supposed conversion of Lucius, a British

* This is asserted on the authority of the Welsh Triads.

† 2 Tim. iv. 21.

king, be thought worthy of attention. But his kingship, if not imaginary, was very diminutive, amounting to little more than a provincial government under the Romans. His conversion is said to have been effected by the lustre of miracles, and by means of an embassy from Rome; both which render it suspicious*. Though it is triumphantly asserted, that the example of this royal convert was so effectual that, in a little time, not an unbeliever remained †, we know what kind of converts they usually are that are caught by shoals.

The subsequent age commenced auspiciously; for Christians had now filled the Roman empire, being found in all the cities, villages, and camps. Tertullian and Origen glory that places in Britain, inaccessible to the Roman arms, yielded to the triumphant banner of the cross. Several of the Roman emperors were either liberal enough to leave the Christians to what they deemed their obstinate humour, or too much occupied with war or pleasure, to find leisure to trouble a despised sect. At other times, when persecution raged in Gaul, our island was the asylum of religious liberty. Diocletian boasted of having blotted out the Christian name; but Gildas, our most ancient historian, merely says, “In that bloody time, Christianity *almost* disappeared in *some* parts;” and there were, after this desolating period, many in Britain who bore the Christian name. At this time, the Gospel is supposed to have been first introduced into Scotland, or Ireland, and king Donald to have been converted. Now, also, the

* Spanhemii, Introductio ad Historiam sacram.

† Ita ut in brevi nullus infidelis remaneret.—BEDE.

Popish legends tell us, St. Ursula and eleven thousand virgins were martyred for the Gospel. But St. Alban is called our proto-martyr. His kindness in sheltering a Christian preacher from the fury of persecution, by giving him an asylum in his house at Verulam, a Roman colony near London, was rewarded by his conversion to the faith of Christ. He sealed his profession with his blood; and the town of St. Alban's derived its name from the martyr*. Though the persecution which raged in Britain was short, heavy complaints were made of the places of worship being demolished, the sacred Scriptures burned, and the ministers of religion forced to hide themselves from the storm. But toleration was soon restored; and Constantius, the father of Constantine the Great, even while professing to execute the imperial decree for persecution, reigned in Britain with gentle sway. Helena, the wife of Constantius, is renowned as an eminent saint, but not till after her departure from Britain, and the supposed conversion of her son. Our country has been pronounced happy, beyond all others, in giving birth to Constantine, the first Christian emperor. It is not, however, pretended that he became a believer during his residence in Britain. Having hastened to York, to receive the injunctions of his dying father, he was there invested with the imperial purple, and shortly after marched to Rome, to meet Maxentius, who opposed his elevation. On the eve of the decisive battle, he is said to have seen in the heavens the figure of a cross, with the inscription, "By this conquer." But, after all that has been said on both

* Fuller.

sides, it still remains an awful doubt whether Constantine ever possessed any other than a political religion. By this event, however, the British churches enjoyed profound peace during the former half of the fourth century; though they are charged with a portion of the Arianism which, at this era, generally infected the church.

But, in the fifth century, our island produced other tares. The famous heresiarch, Pelagius, seems to have been a Welshman, called Morgan; for both these names signify maritime birth or residence. His favourite disciple, who was most zealous in support of the heresy, was Celestius, a Scotchman. These two, who were equally celebrated for talents and industry, adopted sentiments which somewhat resembled the system afterwards called Arminianism. They maintained that death was not the consequence of sin, but of an original law of our creation; that the crime of Adam affected himself only, so that there was no original sin, nor human depravity; that the grace or favour of God was given according to human deserts; and that our free will, not divine influence, is the source of virtue*. To wipe off from us the odium of this heresy, it has been observed, that Pelagius the prophet, without honour in his own country, was compelled to travel, in order to disseminate his errors. In Africa, he was opposed by the renowned Augustine, by whose means those sentiments were condemned. At St. Alban's, a synod was held to suppress this heresy, which had been propagated widely by Agricola. The ecclesiastical historians

* Spanhemii Introd. ad Hist., vol. i. p. 479.

exult in the decision ; and, as it is said that the orthodox appealed to the Scripture, we may at least glory in the umpire*. The hydra, though apparently crushed, put forth new heads, so that Germanus and Lupus, two French preachers, were sent over to extinguish Pelagianism. They are represented as the field and village preachers of their day †.

But as the century advanced, the moral hemisphere was darkened. Vortigern, a British king, having been guilty of an incestuous connexion with his own daughter, a synod was called, in which his crime was condemned. The same prince, who is painted as a monster of wickedness, adopted, when harassed by the perpetual inroads of the Scots and Picts, the desperate resolution of calling to his aid the pagan Saxons. They soon became masters, and completed the ruin both of the church and state. Our countrymen at this period are called "the ink of the age." They were indeed black with wickedness, from which no class was exempt ; but even the clergy were abandoned to drunkenness, and all manner of debauchery. Palladius, who seems to have been sent by Celestine, bishop of Rome, both to Scotland and Ireland, having been removed by death from an unsuccessful mission, the renowned St. Patrick was deputed to convert the Irish. After labouring with great success, and founding the see of Armagh, he died in 413, at the great age of one hundred and twenty, and was honoured as the apostle of Ireland.

The Saxons, who now reigned, are represented as

* Fuller, book i. p. 30.

† Per trivium et rura et devia. Spanhemius, 456, et Mosheim, 176.

fierce persecutors of religion; not because the Britons were Christians, but because the Christians were Britons. After a long and destructive conflict, that degree of civilization which we had received from Rome, and the wretched pittance of religion that still survived, amidst the superstitions and vices of the times, retired with the vanquished Britons into Wales*. The renowned Arthur is said to have wrought wonders of valour, and his uncle, St. David, miracles of sanctity. We record with pleasure an excellent saying of St. Asaph, who, at this time, presided over a seminary at Bangor, "They who oppose the preaching of God's word, envy the salvation of mankind†."

At the close of this century, the Anglo-Saxons, who had supplanted the aboriginal Britons, received missionaries from Rome. Ethelbert, king of Kent, the most powerful of the Saxon monarchs, was already prepared for the mission by means of his wife Bertha, a daughter of the king of France, renowned for her beauty and Christian piety. Some children from our isle were exposed for sale in the public market at Rome, when Gregory, who was afterwards Pope, happened to be present: he asked of what country they were, and was told they were Angles: to which he replied, "They have the countenances of angels. Of what province are they?" "From Deira," now Durham: "They must be delivered *dei ira*;" from the wrath of God. "Their king's name is Alla," said the master; "and they shall be taught to sing Allelujah," replied the Christian minister.

When Gregory was promoted to the see of Rome,

* Fuller, b. i. p. 40.

† Fuller, Ch. Hist. of Brit. book i. p. 42.

he sent over Austin, who, with forty Benedictine monks, landed in the isle of Thanet. He came in papal style, displaying the weapons of his holy warfare, elevating a silver cross, and a tablet which contained a picture of Jesus; while the sacred chaunt of the litany solicited the ears to aid the fascination of the eye. As Ethelbert, who had been half converted by his beautiful wife, submitted to baptism, who can wonder that his courtiers and subjects followed? Thus the kingdom of Kent, not the whole island, became Roman Catholic, rather than Christian*. But the ancient Britons in Cornwall, and in Wales, as well as the Scots and the Picts in the north, still preserved the purer religion of their ancestors.

At the close of this century, died St. Columba, who, in the language of the country, was called Colum Cille, or Colum of the Cells, from the hundred monasteries which he founded. He was the apostle of the Highlands of Scotland, and founder of the famous monastery of Iona, one of the Hebrides, of which he was the first abbot†.

* In answer to many superstitious queries from Austin, Gregory advises him to leave the Pagans in possession of their beloved feasts, provided that their names were changed, and that the Pagans, instead of slaying the victims in honour of devils, feasted upon them to the praise of some Christian saint. Thus the conversion of the Saxons appears a mere change of names.

† He descended from the kings of Ireland, his native country. His birth, in the year 521, was preceded by intimations of his future sanctity and eminence. The most learned men of that day were his tutors, and dignified him, when a child, with the title of saint. At the age of twenty-eight, he founded the monastery of Darmah, now Derry, in Ireland, where, not long ago, a copy of the Gospels, transcribed by his hand, was extant. Having visited the continent of Europe, his labours were so acceptable, that Sigibert, king of France, made him large offers to induce him to remain in his dominions; to which Columba replied, "I, who

The seventh century was the age of papal corruption. By the advice of a hermit, Austin called a council, at which the British clergy were induced to attend, in order to judge from the humility or pride of the archbishop, whether he was from heaven or from beneath. The grand discussion was what Beza derides as *quæstio lunatica*, a lunatic dispute, on what day of the moon Easter should be kept. For as Easter* is not to be found in Scripture, it has not, of course, decided the time of celebration. At length, Austin, unable to bend the stubborn Britons to a foreign yoke, excommunicated those who possessed what little religion yet remained. He then sought to indemnify the Roman communion, by the conversion of the Pagan Saxons,

have resigned my own property for Christ, ought not to grasp at that of others.' After his return to Ireland, he cast a compassionate eye on the islands of Scotland, which lay in Pagan darkness; and, when he was forty-two years of age, he crossed over in a wicker boat, covered with hides, and settled in the island of Iona. This was the origin of the Culdees, on whom was pronounced a censure, which is their highest praise, that they taught only what they could learn from the prophetical, evangelical, and apostolical writings. Columba here endured incredible hardships. The Druids, who pretended to magic, opposed him as the destroyer of their superstition. "When do you sail?" said one of them to Columba. "On the third day," replied Columba, "if God will, and I live." "I will raise storms, and cover you with darkness," cried the Druid Broichan. "All things," replied the Christian, "are under the control of the omnipotent God, and I am guided by him." Columba displayed an extraordinary spirit of devotion and diligence in his ministry. He studied the Scriptures with intense application, and required his disciples to prove every doctrine by producing texts from the inspired word. Hence they were preserved from the growing corruptions of popery, and were, for many ages, the asylum of truth and pure religion, when other parts of the British isles were grovelling in darkness and superstition. Columba died in the place of worship, in his seventy-seventh year. His writings are said to have been numerous, but those which are extant, are chiefly hymns for divine service, in monkish-Latin rhyme.—Dr. Smith's Life of St. Columba, passim. Spanheim, Mosheim.

* It is well known, that the Greek word, in Acts xii. 4, should have been rendered *passover*.

whom he is said to have baptized in crowds. In the course of this century, indeed, all the kings and nations of the heptarchy were brought into the Roman, if not the Christian, fold.

Austin having died, about the year 610, was buried at Canterbury; and as Ethelbert departed this life shortly after, his son and successor shook off the profession of Christianity. Laurentius, who succeeded Austin, was preparing to follow those priests who had fled from our apostate isle, when St. Peter was sent to chastise his cowardice, by a nocturnal flagellation. He then presented himself before Eadbald, the Pagan king, black and blue with apostolic stripes; which so wrought upon his Majesty, as to induce him to renounce his incestuous amours, and embrace the Christian faith*. Such are the tales with which the history of these times abounds. Theodore, a native of Tarsus, in Cilicia, sent over by the Pope to fill the see of Canterbury, being a bishop of a different spirit from his countryman, Paul, reduced, by his visitations, the whole of the Saxon empire to the Roman uniformity; though a great part of his life was spent in opposing Wilfrid, archbishop of York. Theodore is renowned as the best scholar, and greatest promoter of schools that Britain had known. He was celebrated through all the western church, for writing a penitential, or treatise to direct what penance shall be enjoined for certain crimes; a book which now excites only contempt and disgust. Sigebert, king of the east Angles, is extolled as a pious prince, whose zeal for learning founded the university of Cambridge. A Northumbrian chief, called Oswald,

* uller, b. ii. p. 70.

sent for preachers from the monastery of Columba at Iona, to teach his subjects the doctrines of the Gospel. They are particularly praised for their knowledge of the sacred Scriptures; and, from everything recorded concerning them, they appear to have been worthy and useful men.

The eighth, though a century of vice, is celebrated as the era of great men. Wilfrid, the quarrelsome prelate of York, was called the Athanasius of his day; rather because he withstood all the world, than for his heroism in maintaining any important point. While kings were imitating the mortifications of hermits, he displayed the pomp of kings. Athelmus, the first bishop of Sherbourne, was also the first Englishman who wrote in Latin. But the venerable Bede may be called, in sacred language, "a light that shineth in a dark place." By his ecclesiastical history of England, he rescued the period we have reviewed from total oblivion. His homilies were much read; and his translation of the Gospel of John into English, conferred great advantages on the church*. Alcuinus was the instructor of his age, and the glory of our island. Taught by the venerable Bede, he instructed Charlemagne, emperor of the West, and was called the emperor's delight. The learned of that day, exclaimed "A man born in a remote corner of the world has astonished the whole globe with his genius." But, with a few exceptions in favour of good sense and religion, all ranks were infected with the mania of monkery. To exchange their royal robes for the habit of some religious order, was the ambition of kings and

* Miller's Propagation of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 141.

queens; not merely those who had lived to see the world retire from them, but even youthful queens, and princes at the summit of their glory. As it was the fashion to hunt for relics, the body of St. Alban was discovered, and disturbed with superstitious honours. Several councils were held in England, during this age and early in the following: one more famous than the rest met at Cleveshoo, in Kent. Their canons afford melancholy proofs of the ignorance and impurity of the age; ignorance, which made it a merit for the priests to know the Creed and Lord's Prayer; and impurity, which could publish such rules of virtue, as no modest person could endure to read.

Egbert, king of Wessex, or the West Saxons, who had been forced to retire in his youth to the court of France, where he derived great advantages from the learned men whom Charlemagne had gathered round him, returned to show that knowledge is power; for he soon made himself supreme, and gave to his kingdom the name of Anglesland, or England. But his reign was disturbed by the irruptions of the Danes, who were yet savage Pagans. These marauders determined on the conquest of a country which now seemed to trust for its defence to the crucifix, instead of the sword. Their rage was principally directed against the monasteries, which they levelled with the ground. King Edmund, whom they vanquished, refusing to deny the Saviour, was tied to a tree, and pierced with arrows till he died. The place of his sepulchre was called St. Edmund's Bury. Ethelwolp, the son and successor of Egbert, full of the superstition of the times, gave, by a

solemn charter, the tithes of all the kingdom to the clergy, because, according to his own confession, he was alarmed by the Pagan Danes, and wished, by this act of piety, to procure the salvation of his soul. The son of Ethelwolp was the renowned Alfred. After a long and bloody conflict with the Danes, he succeeded in establishing himself on the throne. For gentleness of disposition, diligent industry, and purity of manners, he is highly extolled. To him has been attributed that palladium of our liberties, trial by jury; and when a king writes an invective against unjust judges, may we not hope, that in his own government he imitated “the Eternal King who sitteth on the throne judging righteously?*” At this time, John Duns Scotus is mentioned as the most learned man of his age and nation. He appears to have thought common sense no heretic; for he opposed the increasing infatuation of the times, by declaring, that in the Lord’s Supper we have not the body and blood of our Lord, but a memorial and sign.

* From the thickest shades of darkness, he emerged as the morning star, for he was twelve years of age before a master could be found to undertake his education; and he complained, that south of the Thames he had none who could read English. But he invited over learned men, who delivered lectures at Oxford, of which university he is considered the founder. In proof of this, Fuller appeals to Alfred’s arms in University College, with an inscription which informs us that he built that edifice:

“Nobilis Alfredi sunt hæc insignia, cujus

Primum constructa est hæc pietate domus.”

His literary works are sufficient to procure him reputation as an author, though he had not worn a crown. A manual of pious meditations, a version of the Psalms of David, and a translation (from the Vulgate we suppose) of the Old and New Testament, are attributed to his pen. Viewed in every light, where can we find so good evidence of true religion on a throne? He died in the year 900, and was buried at Hyde Abbey, Winchester.

In the tenth century, Ethelstan is said to have laboured to promote the translation of the Scriptures in his dominions. But the most prominent person of the age is Dunstan, a monk, who contrived, through various fortunes, to raise himself to the see of Canterbury. He assisted Edgar to usurp his brother's throne; and both king and priest persecuted the married clergy, in order to fill all the benefices with monks.

The eleventh century opens with a view of Danish kings upon the British throne. Canute is represented as at first a sacrilegious murderer, who afterwards attempted to expiate his crimes by prodigal superstitions. Renouncing the use of his crown, he sent it to Winchester, to be placed on the image of Jesus. Edward, who is surnamed the Confessor, is the favourite of the monkish historians. From him the British monarchs derive all their power to cure the king's evil. William the Conqueror introduced a new dynasty, checked the Pope's encroachments, and when called to own himself a vassal of the holy see, replied, "I hold my kingdom from none but God and my sword." The rude soldier seems to have achieved more for the cause of religion than the sainted confessor; for he introduced a more manly, independent tone, and allowed men to think for themselves. He was such a promoter of learning, which the Danish ravages had reduced to the lowest ebb, that Mosheim styles him the Mæcenas of the age. Of William Rufus, who succeeded the Conqueror, ecclesiastics have given a hideous picture; for he seems to have viewed *them* in their true light, and to have felt himself authorised to

wrest from them by force, what they had gained from the people by fraud.

Should the reader say, "All this is the history of kings and monks, where were the Christians?"—we reply, buried in obscurity so profound, that they have almost eluded our research. Alfric, archbishop of Canterbury, is indeed celebrated as the author of homilies, which breathe more of the evangelical temper than the times would have led us to expect. Elpheg, his successor, displayed the true spirit of a primitive martyr, in his refusal to betray what he thought the interests of the church, to the fierce persecuting Danes. "Shall I be afraid," says he, "to go to heaven, because a violent death lies in the way? I have given the enemy no just occasion to use me ill. It is true, I have converted some of the most considerable of them to Christianity; but if this be a fault, I shall be happy in suffering for it. If you think the Danes are particularly enraged against me for reproving their immorality and injustice, I cannot help it. I am bound to these remonstrances by my commission; and unless I give the wicked man warning, his blood will be upon my head. Shall I flee, and desert my worthy countrymen? What can I be less than a hireling, if when I see the wolf ready to devour my sheep, I leave them to shift for themselves? I am resolved therefore to stand the shock, and submit to the order of Providence." He was cruelly murdered by the Danes, and we would hope now wears the martyr's crown.

The glimpse of religion which we behold in this passage, induces us to hope, that there were some witnesses for the truth, amidst the gross superstitions then in

vogue. The monasteries, it is probable, contained men who, with pure motives, devoted themselves to prayer and the study of holy Scripture, whence they learned to sigh in secret over the surrounding ignorance and pollution. Henry, surnamed Beauclerc, or the learned, summoned a council, in which canons were decreed against the crimes of priests, and especially against their marriages. The prelates, most famed for sanctity, were the greatest enemies to the priests' wives; but when many of the clergy, particularly those of Norfolk, loving their wives better than their bishops, refused to suffer man to separate what God had joined, the king at last took the affair into his own hand, and allowed the priests to keep their wives by parting with their money, to pay for what was already their own. When Stephen seized the crown, and inflamed the whole kingdom with the contests between him and the empress Maud, the clergy, with courtly facility, treated their oaths of allegiance, says Fuller, "as seamen treat their compass, saying them backwards and forwards." Whole ages were spent in the conflicts of the prelates; sometimes with each other, and sometimes with their king. Ecclesiastics had now claimed an exemption from civil jurisdiction, and a right of appealing to Rome in all their affairs. The king was at one time informed, that, since his accession, a hundred murders had been committed by men in holy orders, who all escaped the death which they deserved.

But while Henry opposed the exemption of priests from the jurisdiction of the laws, Thomas à Becket became the hero of his order, and filled all Europe with his fame. From an obsequious courtier, he suddenly

became a stern, mortified priest, armed with all the haughty sanctity of the times; and by a long course of stubborn distress, and insolent prosperity, he so embittered the life of his prince, that Henry, in a passion, exclaimed, "Have I none that will rid me of this insolent priest?" Some courtiers, eager to gratify their master's revenge, stabbed Becket at the altar, in the cathedral of Canterbury. Although the king declared himself innocent of all serious intentions against the prelate's life, it is probable, the vengeance was to him, like the prophetic roll, sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly. He was compelled to endure severe mortifications, and at last to do penance for the crime of which he had sworn himself innocent, by yielding his bare back to be scourged by the monks. Becket, dying for the rights of the clergy, was canonized, performed wondrous cures on those who visited his sepulchre, and drew incalculable treasures to his shrine; so that it was said, "to Becket was offered much, to Mary little, to Jesus nothing*." The crusade, or the expedition to recover Palestine from the hands of the Mahometans, was the folly of the day, in which Richard Cœur de Lion, with vast multitudes of his subjects, embarked.

Amidst all this superstition, we have to record, that in the year 1160, some real Christians sought in Britain an asylum from the persecutions of Germany. The writers of those times record their history in a way so cursory and confused, that it is difficult to ascertain facts. It is, however, confessed, that the leader of these refugees, whose name was Gerrard, was neither ignorant nor illiterate; though we are told his followers were,

* Mosheim, 402.

because they made no other reply to the cavils of their enemies, than "We believe as we are taught by the Word of God." A council was called at Oxford to try these thirty heretics, who were not likely to meet with either mercy or justice from an assembly of haughty prelates. They were condemned, branded on the forehead, publicly whipped; and, being turned into the fields, in the depth of winter, when all were forbidden to relieve them, they perished. Even their enemies allow that they behaved with great calmness and moderation; and when the inhuman sentence was executed on them, they sang, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you and persecute you." Their conduct, worthy of the most righteous cause, renders it probable that they were our first martyrs to pure religion, and to the duty of separating from a corrupt communion*. Some historians call them publicans, others Vaudois, and Waldenses. They were, doubtless, a branch of those confessors, whom Henry, at the request of the French king, persecuted in France as well as in England.

The thirteenth century commences with the reign of John, who was all that a king ought not to be. He involved himself in disputes with the clergy and barons, which ended in his entire defeat. For the crime of the monarch, in refusing to allow the Pope's nomination of Langton to the see of Canterbury, the whole kingdom was laid under an interdict, by which the churches were shut up; the ceremonies, on which the salvation of men was then supposed to depend, were intermitted; and the bodies of the dead, denied interment in consecrated

* Warner, Ecc. Hist. vol. i. 349. Petrie's Ecc. Hist. 329.

ground, were thrown into ditches, or on the highways, to the annoyance of the living. The king himself was afterwards excommunicated; and at last, his kingdom was given to Philip of France. John, destitute of internal resources, and of able counsellors, at length meanly submitted, when the Pope's legate, after trampling upon the money which the king paid him, and keeping the crown and sceptre in his possession five days, restored them to him who knew not how to use them.

A history of learning would here give a distinguished place to the name of Roger Bacon, a Franciscan monk, who cultivated experimental philosophy with so much success, that his contemporaries deemed him a magician, for which imaginary crime he was long imprisoned. Robert Grosteste, or Greathead, bishop of Lincoln, narrowly escaped a similar fate. As the Popes were now pursuing a scheme for draining the kingdom of money, and securing all lucrative benefices to Italians, the bishops were commanded, at one time, to provide for a hundred of these hungry foreigners, and Innocent IV. ordered Greathead to give the first vacant canon's place to a boy, who was nephew to his holiness. But the hardy prelate wrote to the Pope, "That, if we except the sins of Lucifer and antichrist, there can be no greater crime than to deprive the souls of men of the spiritual aid of their pastors, by conferring the benefices on persons incapable of performing the duties." This so inflamed the unhallowed passions of his holiness, that he swore by St. Peter and St. Paul, if it were not for the gentleness of his disposition, he would so confound this doting old man, make him such a prodigy of a wretch, that all Christendom should stand amazed at his

punishment. One of the cardinals entreating the Pope not to precipitate that revolt and separation from Rome, which would one day take place, said, "We must confess that this is a holy man, of more religious life than any of us; yea, Christendom hath not his equal; a great philosopher; skilled in Latin and Greek; a constant preacher; a lover of chastity; and a loather of simony." Roger Bacon pronounces Greathead, who is said to have written two hundred volumes, and Adam de Marisco, the two most learned men in the world. Lampe mentions an English knight, Peter Cassiadore, who wrote an epistle to the British church, on shaking off the tyranny of the Roman pontiff. Walter Mapez, archdeacon of Oxford, opposed the church of Rome, and to secure himself, craftily employed a silly buffoon to repeat satirical Latin rhymes against his holiness.

The commencement of the fourteenth century was the golden age of popery; and had the accustomed march of affairs continued, our island had been one vast monastery, and the English a nation of monks. But the insolent avarice of the court of Rome, and the pride of the priesthood, now become proverbial, prepared the nation for more auspicious events. In the state, as well as the church, this was an age of convulsions. Two kings were deposed and murdered; on which Fuller remarks, "that the clergy were the first to lead this dance of disloyalty, and that, in all state alterations, be they never so bad, the pulpit will be of the same wood as the council-board*." While, however, the Pope strove to profit in this struggle for power, he was by

* Fuller's Church History, book iv. p. 153.

untoward circumstances a loser. Edward III. emboldened by his splendid victories in France, and favoured by a long and prosperous reign, forbade the clergy to send to Italy the money which he needed for his armies. The statute of Premunire, passed in this reign, opposed an effectual check to the encroachments of the Pope, by rendering void all his presentations or collations to any bishopric or benefice in the realm.

Now, as the Arabian traveller rejoices to arrive at an island of fertility amidst deserts of sand, we congratulate ourselves, and our readers, on our arrival at the period when we are relieved from the disgusting sight of contemptible superstitions, by the re-appearance of true religion. We account it the glory of our Isle, that over its bosom hovered the morning star, which led the benighted nations to the Saviour. Germany has lately been roused to erect a monument to its brightest ornament—Luther; and it is the pleasing duty of a British ecclesiastical historian to rear a grateful tribute to the memory of Wickliffe. That there was some real religion in our isle, before his time, we doubt not; for in the course of our researches, we have sometimes felt that “we trode on concealed fires.” The persecuted Germans, who were led by Gerrard to seek an asylum here, we have already noticed; and as the Waldenses and Bohemians preserved a holy seed, pure from the papal corruption, so they maintained some connexion with this country, though their first colony perished by the fury of persecution. We shall shortly have occasion to notice the intercourse which Wickliffe maintained with them, from whom indeed it seems that he derived that light

of pure religion which shone so clearly in his writings. John de Wickliffe, born in the year 1324, in the parish of Wickliffe, in Yorkshire, rose as the morning star of the Reformation. Educated at Oxford, he read public lectures there, which were not the less admired for being seasoned with invectives against the begging friars. A sentence of his holiness, excluding Wickliffe from the office of warden of Canterbury college, contributed to sharpen his opposition to the Pope. Having published a defence of the kingdom against the demands of Rome, he was introduced to court, and appointed to an important embassy. He was presented by the king, in 1374, to the rectory of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, and, in the year following, to a prebend in the church of Westbury. After he had opposed the tyranny and superstitions of the church of Rome, without much serious resistance, a bull was sent to the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London, to seize the heretic, and put him in irons, as an answer to his arguments. The Pope wrote to the king to favour the bishops in the prosecution, and to the university of Oxford, to expel this pestilential doctor. But, in the meanwhile, Edward III. died, and Richard II. being a minor, his uncle, John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and the queen-mother, protected Wickliffe, the popular favourite. The reformer was called, in 1376, before a synod in St. Paul's cathedral; but, being accompanied by the duke of Lancaster, Lord Percy, and other powerful supporters, Wickliffe was a mere silent spectator of the quarrel between the prelates and nobles, which ended in a riot, and left him

to depart unhurt and uncensured*. He had the intrepidity to present to the parliament, in 1379, a severe philippic against the tyranny of the church of Rome. He wisely prepared the way for his translation of the Bible, by a book on the truth of the Scriptures, entitled, *The Path to perfect Knowledge*; in which he urges all Christians to study the Scriptures diligently, especially the New Testament, which, says he, "is full of authority, and gives understanding to the simple, in all points needful to salvation." He boldly asserts, that as Elijah had the truth of God against King Ahab and four hundred and fifty priests of Baal; so a few poor men and idiots may have the truth now in opposition to all the prelates and clergy. Having published sixteen conclusions, the first of which openly denied the doctrine of transubstantiation, they were condemned by the chancellor of Oxford. He appealed to the king and parliament; but perceiving the friendship of the court, which was rather political finesse than pious zeal, growing cold, he withdrew from the storm, and, according to some, made a confession of error at Oxford; while others assert him to have been banished. He retired to his living of Lutterworth, where he reared the pillars of the Reformation, by completing with immense labour his translation of the Scriptures. A stroke of the palsy, in the year 1387, removed him to his reward †.

* Fuller, book iv. p. 135.

† Of the opinions with which he was charged, we select the following specimen. "It is blasphemy to call any but Christ head of the Church. Peter had no more power than the rest of the apostles. The Pope is no successor of Peter, unless he imitates him. The infallibility of the church of Rome is blasphemy. By the abomination which maketh desolate,

Who can seriously reflect on the thick darkness from which Wickliffe emerged, and not acknowledge, with mingled astonishment and admiration, the clearness, justness, and comprehension of his views! The people whose history we are now introducing will readily perceive that Wickliffe was the first of Puritans as well as of Protestants, and that, in many leading articles, he dissents with us from the religion now established, as he then did from the papal hierarchy. He presents an instructive and encouraging proof of the efficacy of the Scriptures to make men wise to salvation; for his translation of the bible was one cause of his superior knowledge of religion. Who can wonder that principles, which so forcibly appealed to common sense, and were so well calculated to liberate mankind from the fetters of priestly tyranny, should find a numerous host of admirers? To avoid opposition was impossible. But we naturally ask, how the daring promulgator of truths so offensive could escape the deadly fangs of the great red dragon? Perhaps his boldness, which was tempered with a happy portion of prudence, embarrassed his enemies, and left them no means of attempting his life, with any prospect of success. His numerous writings were wisely adapted to spread his

spoken of in Mathew, is meant the Pope. Bishop's benedictions, confirmations, consecration of churches, are only tricks to get money. There were only two orders 'n the apostles' times, priests and deacons. The church of God consists only of the elect. Tithes are a purely voluntary support to ministers, not to be enforced by penalties. Wise men leave that undetermined which the Scriptures have not settled. All writers, since the year 1000 of the Christian era, were heretics. Baptism is not essential to salvation, nor can it confer grace, or take away sin. Sacred initiation into holy orders is not essential, as it impresses no character. Vowing virginity is a doctrine of devils. The worship of saints is idolatry."

sentiments more rapidly, and to procure a welcome to his translation when it should appear. Those who had retained the truth of religion, especially the concealed Lollards or Waldenses, would naturally seize with avidity sentiments so congenial to their taste, and regard their author as a noble witness for the truth. At the same time, many to whom the principles were wholly new, felt their divine power, and blessed him through whose “tender mercies the day-spring from on high had visited them, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide their feet into the way of peace.”

By the labours of Wickliffe, or of those from whom he derived his sentiments, the lovers of truth were so numerous, that in the reign of Richard II., an act of parliament notices many persons who preached in churchyards and markets, without license of the ordinary. Wickliffe's letters diffused the same spirit on the Continent; for Jerome of Prague, and some Bohemians, returning to their own country, carried with them an epistle from our reformer to John Huss and his brethren*.

* The substance of this letter, as it is a curiosity, we present to our readers: “Carissimi in Domino fratres, &c. Dearest brethren in the Lord, whom I love in the truth, and not I only, but also all who have known the truth: that truth, I say, which remaineth in you, and shall be with you for ever, through the grace of God. I rejoice greatly that the brethren who came from you, bear testimony to your belief of the truth, and that ye also walk in the truth. I have heard, brother, how Antichrist afflicts you, bringing numerous and various tribulations on the disciples of Christ. Nor is it wonderful that you are treated thus, since, through the whole world, the law of Christ is now oppressed by the adversaries, and that great many-headed dragon, of which John speaks in the Revelation, hath cast out of its mouth a vast flood after the woman to swallow her up. But our most faithful Lord will certainly deliver his only spouse faithful to himself. Let us, therefore, be strong in the Lord our God,

The sentiments of Wickliffe, or, in other words, the principles of religion, took possession of many minds

and in his immense goodness, firmly believing that he will not permit his beloved friends to fail in their good purpose, provided we love him as we ought with our whole heart. For adversity would not have prevailed, if iniquity had not. Therefore, let no affliction or oppression for Christ depress us; since we know, that whomsoever the Lord receives into the number of his sons he chastens. For it is the will of the Father of Mercies that we should be exercised with afflictions in the present life, that he may spare us in the future; because the gold, which the supreme artificer chuses, he desires to have purged thoroughly in the fire here, that he may deposit it hereafter in his most pure, eternal treasury. We see the time which we possess here is short and transitory, but the life which we expect in future is blessed and eternal. Let us labour, therefore, as long as time with us shall last, that we may be found worthy to enter into that rest. What do we see in this life, but pains, and griefs, and labours, and that which should most affect believers, the contempt and violation of the divine law? Let us, therefore, strive with all our powers, to lay hold of those blessings which shall be durable and eternal, denying our earthly, perishing appetites. Let us view the conversation of the brethren in former ages, let us behold the saints of the Old and New Testament; how they endured tossings and afflictions on this ocean, suffering bonds and imprisonments, were stoned, sawn asunder, and slain by the sword. They wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, and suffered other trials, which the Epistle to the Hebrews largely relates: all going in the narrow way, in the footsteps of Christ, who said, where I am my servants shall be. 'Therefore, having so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside,' &c. But let us seek help from the Lord, and fight manfully against Antichrist his adversary. Let us therefore love his law from the heart, and not be fraudulent labourers, but in all things, as far as the Lord enables, act boldly, and be brave in the cause of God, in hopes of the eternal reward. Thou, therefore, Huss, my dearly beloved brother in Christ, unknown to me indeed by face, yet not in faith and love, (for the ends of the earth cannot separate those whom the love of Christ unites,) be strong in the grace which is given to thee. Fight as a good soldier of Jesus Christ in word or deed, and recall whomsoever thou canst into the way of truth; for neither on account of erroneous and lying decrees, nor for the sake of the errors of Antichrist, is the truth of the Gospel to be detained in silence. Rather, confounding the craft of Satan, comfort and establish the members of Christ. For shortly, the Lord willing, Antichrist shall come to an end. This affords me great joy, that in your kingdom and elsewhere God hath so strengthened the hearts of some, that they even endure with joy prisons, exiles, and death for the word of God. I have, therefore, my dearest friend, nothing farther to write; but I confess I could most willingly confirm thee, and all of you who love the law of Christ, in that love. So I salute

both in England and Scotland; and some are recorded as martyrs to the truth. The bishops were obliged to enforce confession by public edicts; and all suspected persons were called to make a solemn abjuration. "I promise," say they, "to be buxom to the holy church, and to the archbishop." Wickliffe had, however, several honourable coadjutors to the cause of truth. John Trevisa, vicar of Berkley, is said to have made a translation of the Scriptures into English. Robert Longland attacked Antichrist in a piece of satirical poetry, called the "Complaint and Prayer of a Ploughman." He condemns the pride of the priests, and the lasciviousness of the unmarried clergy, as well as the trade in sins and the souls of men, by purchasing pardons and ecclesiastical livings. He derides purgatory, and treats the Pope as Antichrist. Richard, archbishop of Armagh, opposed the monks, and translated the Bible into the Irish tongue. Thomas Bradwardine, archbishop of Canterbury, one of the most learned men of his day, was a strenuous defender of the doctrine of grace against the Pelagians.

We have, through many centuries, been compelled to measure our progress by mere barren dates, which present no idea to the mind, as in a long night of sickness we count the clock, because nothing else occurs to diversify the tedious stillness; but we may now advance from era to era of lively interest and high importance. Henry IV., before his usurpation of the throne, pretended to favour the popular doctrines of

them all, from my inmost soul, especially thy coadjutor in the Gospel of Christ, entreating you to pray for me and for the whole church of Christ. 'Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead,' &c.—
Comenii Ratio disciplinæ in unitate fratrum Bohemorum, p. 6.

the Wickliffites or Lollards; but when in the seat of power, he courted the clergy to sanctify his crimes: thus, while they pronounced their ghostly benediction on his treason, he burned those whom they branded for heretics. In this reign was enacted the barbarous law, which empowered a bishop to consign a heretic to the flames. A statute so abhorrent to humanity, justice, and religion was too welcome to the clergy to be suffered to lie idle in their hands. In the year 1401, William Sautré, a priest of London, was accused of various crimes, one of which may suggest the nature of the rest:—he would not worship the cross, but only him that died on it. That the honour of the priesthood might not be tarnished, before he was delivered to the secular power he was degraded to a layman, by stripping him of all the foppery of the sacred orders.

Many viewed this proto-protestant martyr, as ascending in a chariot of fire, like Elijah, to the skies. John Badby, an illiterate mechanic, suffered for the same cause; and though the Prince of Wales made him the most tempting offers, if he would conform to the faith of the holy church, he nobly persisted to give his body to be burned, for what appeared to him a purer faith. Even the House of Commons was suspected of being tinged with heretical pravity; for they proposed to the king to seize the church lands, and petitioned for a mitigation of the severities towards the Lollards. But the lords spiritual and temporal petitioned that justice might be done upon these troublers of Israel; complaining that unlawful conventicles were held, and that preaching in schools and private houses diffused the poison of heresy. Already, Wickliffe's Bible was

secreted as a forbidden treasure, and the effects of it appeared, in teaching men to hold meetings wherever they could hear the Scripture explained, and offer worship congenial with its spirit. The number of these nonconformists was so great, that it was confessed to be impossible to provide prisons to contain them; and Walsingham, the historian, reckoned them at one hundred thousand.

When Henry IV. had departed to answer to God for burning heretics, and Archbishop Arundel, who had been the great incendiary, both in church and state, had been starved to death by a disease in his throat (which the Lollards interpreted as a judgment on him, for starving the souls of men), new troubles still vexed the clergy, and called forth all their bigotry. Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, had been considered as the head of the Lollards, and was therefore singled out, in the quaint language of that age, to turn or burn. Henry V. highly esteeming the valiant knight, tried his powers of persuasion upon him; but, as he remained inflexible, he was committed to prison. Having made his escape, he fled into Wales, where he lay for some time concealed. The king was induced by the priests to believe a ridiculous story of his raising an insurrection against the throne, so that when he was taken, it was pretended that he suffered as a traitor, and not as a heretic*. Thus they laboured to blacken the character of a man who was, perhaps, too eminent and popular to be executed ostensibly for his religion: but, when hung up by a chain around his waist, he endured the flames with the forti-

* Warner's Ecc. Hist., part i., p. 506. Fuller.

tude and joy of a mind rich in the approbation of heaven, and the prospect of eternal bliss.

The council of Constance, which burned John Huss, condemned Wickliffe as a heretic; and, by its order, his bones were dug up and burned, and the ashes thrown into a neighbouring brook. In this act they displayed the fury of the dragon, rather than the craft of the serpent; for it served only to give to Wickliffe, and his opinions, the publicity that truth ever seeks. Had they burned the first copies of his Bible, they might have left his bones to rest in peace. Now, from time to time, new fires were kindled, and martyrs sealed the truth with their blood. The name of one of them, which was Goose, afforded merriment to his enemies, who were, probably, glad of this opportunity to keep the people in humour with these sickening spectacles, by jesting with innocent blood.

Buckinghamshire is most famous among the counties of England for the number of its martyrs. At Amersham, where the lovers of Christ and of the Bible held their most numerous meetings, one Tylsworth was burned, and his daughter compelled to set fire to the pile on which her father offered up his life. Several fled the kingdom, and were celebrated on the Continent for their useful labours and patient sufferings. Many were branded on the cheek with the mark of a heretic; and those who recanted, were compelled to wear the figure of a faggot on their sleeve, to indicate that they were brands plucked out of the fire.

Henry VIII. ascended the throne at the commencement of the sixteenth century. Viewing the confessors of the truth as obstinate rebels, who ventured to think

for themselves, or precise puritans, whose strictness condemned his own licentious manners, he felt towards them the hatred which goodness will ever kindle in the breasts of the wicked. When Luther arose in Saxony, our youthful monarch, vain of his scholastic learning, was unwise enough to meet the Reformer in the field of letters, where talents, and not titles, win the laurels. Luther treated his royal antagonist with sarcastic contempt, contending that truth and science know no difference between the prince and the plebeian. The Pope, however, craftily flattered the vanity of the royal author, by rewarding him with the title of Defender of the Faith, which Henry was weak enough to value as the brightest jewel in his crown*.

Before we relate the change of scene which shortly took place, it may be proper to record, with honour, the name of John Collet, dean of St. Paul's, and founder of its school, who, by expounding the epistles of Paul, and establishing a divinity lecture, three days in a week, prepared the way for the Reformation. Though he may, perhaps, be called a papist, he condemned many of the reigning corruptions in the church, and gave so good evidence of being a Christian, that he was accused as a heretic; but, by royal favour, he was protected, and died in peace, in the year 1519, in the fifty-third year of his age†.

* It has been said, that the jester whom Henry, according to the fashion of the times, retained at court, seeing the king overjoyed, asked the reason, and being told that it was because his holiness had conferred this new title, the shrewd fool replied, "My good Harry, let thee and me defend each other, and let the faith alone to defend itself." If this was spoken as a serious joke, the fool was the wisest man of his day; for no party had yet learned the wisdom of leaving truth to support and propagate itself by its own inherent vigour.

† Petrie, 31. Fuller, book v. p. 167.

It has been justly remarked, that, in many of the happiest changes, the worst of men have been the unconscious instruments of accomplishing the designs of heaven. And where has this been more conspicuous than in the reformation of England from popery? Where has so much sin led to so happy results, as in the quarrel between Henry VIII. and the Pope? Cardinal Wolsey, indeed, though himself a haughty prelate, contributed to the overthrow of the papal power in England. In the plenitude of his authority, he seized upon many of the smaller monasteries, to build the splendid college of Christ Church, Oxford. When the holy church had led the way, how could it be expected, that the state would hesitate to follow, and lay its profane hands on treasures so tempting? Mortified, too, at missing St. Peter's chair, the cardinal sought to wreak his vengeance on the emperor, Charles V., to whom he attributed his disappointment. He therefore helped the king's confessor to fill the royal conscience with scruples of the legality of Henry's marriage with Catherine of Spain, the emperor's aunt. Henry applied to the pope, to declare the marriage null; but the pontiff not daring to disoblige the emperor, artfully contrived delays, which ill suited the king's violent passions.

In the midst of these embarrassments, Cranmer was introduced at court, as the man who could cut the knot that Rome refused to untie. He declared the marriage null by the word of God, and advised Henry to consult the universities of Europe, which generally concurred in an answer agreeable to his wishes. The King immediately married Anne Boleyn; and, as the pope

commanded him to take back his former wife, he seized the favourable moment at once to revenge and enrich himself, by renouncing all connexion with Rome, and declaring himself supreme head of the church in England. From this time, he acted the pope to perfection, allowed as much reformation as he pleased, and laid all his subjects on the bed of Procrustes. Some he stretched, as too short for the monarch's faith; and others he decapitated for presuming to look over his shoulders. Protestants and Papists equally fell victims to his ecclesiastical tyranny. Those who knew and loved pure religion, must have condemned, in their hearts, the licentiousness and crimes of Henry; and from what we have seen of Wickliffe's sentiments, we may conclude that his followers could not approve the title of head of the church, which the prince assumed. Nor was the liberty of reading the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, though the most favourite claim of Wickliffe and of all the reformers, by any means universally granted. William Tyndale, who had early imbibed the sentiments of the reformers, finding that he could not execute his project safely in England, retired to Germany, to translate the Scriptures*.

* The first edition was partly bought up at Antwerp, by Bishop Tonsal, with no good intent: But Tyndale availed himself of the bishop's bigotry to get rid of an incorrect work, and to obtain funds for printing a superior edition; so that he who burned the former, was laughed at, as a principal contributor to the expenses of the next edition. This was so eagerly purchased, that the bishops were alarmed, and obtained a royal proclamation to prohibit such translations [Petrie, 169]. The clergy caused Tyndale to be strangled and burned near Antwerp. When tied to the stake, he cried, with a loud voice, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." Tyndale's translation was afterwards, with some alterations and additions, allowed in England, by the influence of Cranmer, who was now rewarded, for his services to the king, by the see of Canterbury. But women and the inferior orders of society were still forbidden to read the sacred volume

The six articles, more truly denominated the bloody bill, were now published, establishing what scarcely deserved the title Fuller gives it, of a twilight religion. For transubstantiation, purgatory, the celibacy of priests, and the necessity of auricular confession, were decreed by the new head of the church. Lord Cromwell, who had been the bulwark of the Reformation, was sacrificed to the capricious tyranny of Henry; and Cranmer had too much of the courtier to do all he might, with too little of the politician to see through the artifices of the popish bishops, who contrived to prevent him from doing what he wished. At one time, six Papists and Protestants were executed together: these were burnt for believing too little, and those were hung for crediting too much. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Chancellor More, died for popery; and, whatever we may think of their creed, we must award them the praise of martyrs for conscience. But Mrs. Askew and others suffered so severely for their zeal, in dispersing the English Bible, when it was forbidden by the monarch, that many may dread to meet them, when, at the last day, they shall rise up in judgment against the despisers of the sacred book. At length, when the Reformation was again yielding to popery, Henry closed a reign of lust and cruelty, by a death which awakened neither respect nor regret in the breasts of any: for he was excommunicated and cursed by the Papists, to whose cause he had given a deadly stab; and by the Protestants he was condemned for ordering masses to be said for the repose of his soul. No communion covets the honour of his name; and while the Christian regards his religion as the

offspring of his passions and his pride, the civil historian must pronounce him one of the greatest tyrants that ever occupied the British throne.

As Edward VI., who succeeded to the crown, was but nine years of age, the Lord Protector, Seymour, with Cranmer, ruled the nation in the king's name. The archbishop now ventured to avow himself more entirely a Protestant, and the exiles of that persuasion returned to their country. Peter Martyr, Bucer, Fagius, and Ochinus, some of the most celebrated Protestant divines of the Continent, were invited to take professorships in our universities. The king's injunctions were published, ordering every parish to be provided with the English Bible, and every minister to procure the New Testament in Latin and English, with the Paraphrase of Erasmus. Preachers also were appointed to make their circuits through the kingdom, explaining the scriptures, and publishing the doctrines of the Gospel; while, besides an English liturgy, which contained a large portion of the sacred scriptures, a new book of homilies was published by authority. But the mass of the people were mad after wakes, processions, and holidays; and the priests, not content with inflaming them by discourses from the pulpit, roused them to arms in defence of the church of Rome. In Devonshire and Norfolk, some thousands rose to compel the government to deny them the use of the English Prayer book and Bible, as well as the sacramental cup. They were, however, easily subdued.

Latimer and Hooper possessed the largest portion of the spirit of their ministry, and laboured most diligently to diffuse the knowledge of the Gospel, by faith-

fully discharging their prime duty, “to preach the word, instant in season, and out of season.” On the rest of the reformers we can bestow but small praise; for what must have been the spirit of the prelates, if, in those times of ignorance, when multitudes never enjoyed an opportunity of hearing a sermon, it was necessary to compel the bishops to preach at least four times a year? Or what regard could Cranmer and Ridley have felt for the immortal interests of their countrymen, when they silenced Hooper, the most laborious and popular preacher of the day, and, in spite of the king’s command, refused to consecrate him to a bishoprick, unless he would wear the popish habits?

This was the first symptom of the separation which afterwards took place among the reformed: for it now appeared, that there were some who wished to make the church of England the half-way house of the Reformation; while others were for going all the lengths to which the scriptures might lead. Hence, the latter party, who pleaded for a church more pure from the corruptions of popery, were denominated *puritans*; when the act of uniformity was passed, in the reign of Charles II., they were called *non-conformists*; and at the Revolution they obtained the title of *dissenters*.

None, however, understood the rights of conscience; for the more rigid reformers, as well as the more lax, were desirous of crushing popery, by other arms than those of truth. A commission was granted to search out all anabaptists, heretics, and contemners of the new liturgy. With others found guilty, was Joan Boucher, called Joan of Kent. She was accused of holding some heretical opinions concerning the incar-

nation of Christ, and as she refused to submit to the archbishop's instructions, and adopt his creed, she was committed to the flames. Van Paris, a Dutchman, was afterwards burned for being an Arian. Thus the reformers tore from their own brow the honours of martyrdom, to bestow them on those whom they deemed the worst of heretics, depriving themselves of all right to complain, when Mary and her popish bishops dealt out to the Protestants the same measure which they had dealt to others.

Edward, having languished in a consumption, died at Greenwich, July 6th, 1553, in the sixteenth year of his age, before he had reigned quite seven years. The Sovereign of the universe thought fit to show this admirable prince to the world, and recall him before he was of age; so that we know not whether to rejoice that he did not live to sully a reputation so fair, or to regret that he was not allowed to accomplish the noble designs he had conceived. For he was certainly checked in his progress by the prelates, who, though the professed friends of the Reformation, trembled lest they should be stripped of their splendour. Endued with an understanding superior to his years, and enriched with uncommon stores of learning, he might have adopted the language of another devout prince: "I have more understanding than the ancients, I am wiser than my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation." When pressed by Cranmer to sign the warrant for burning alive Joan Boucher, he exclaimed, "What! will you send her quick to the devil?" After all the plausible reasons assigned for the bloody deed, Edward's judgment still revolted, so that when he

yielded, he burst into tears, and protested that his tutor should answer for it before God, as, in obedience to the bishop's precepts, he submitted, contrary to his own wish.

As the Reformation of the English establishment retrograded rather than advanced, after the reign of Edward, it may now be useful to attempt some estimate of its real value and extent. The most active instruments in delivering the nation from popery, were not the men who entered most cordially into the true spirit of the Reformation. Nor was this national conversion the conversion of the whole nation. The succeeding reign too clearly proved that it was little more than a change of political system. The mass of all ranks were either Protestants or Papists, Lutherans or Calvinists, high church or low, as the reigning prince, or his cabinet council, happened to dictate. And such will ever be the complexion of a national religion, till the wish of Caligula be realized, and we see a whole nation with but one neck, a body animated with one soul.

The men of obscure name, who, in the reign of the last Henry, studied the sacred Scripture, and followed its dictates, at the hazard of their lives, doubtless rejoiced at the change of measures, on the accession of Edward, and availed themselves of the religious opportunities it afforded, whatever they may have thought of those who held the helm of state. The reading of the Bible being rather enjoined than prohibited, the precious volumes were multiplied, and those who imbibed evangelical sentiments, laboured to diffuse them among others, by conversation, the pulpit, and the press. The Redeemer, whose providence afforded these favourable

opportunities, accompanies such means with the grace of his Holy Spirit, so that we may presume that the number of real Christians much increased. But we have no reason to think that the genuine disciples of Christ, who were before but a small proportion, were ever a majority of the nation. In many parishes, the ministers could not preach, in others they would not, and in not a few they were Papists at heart.

While insurrections in favour of popery threatened the government, the stage, which is supported by gratifying the public taste, however depraved, entertained the people by turning the new religion into ridicule. The sentiments, language, and manners of pious men, will always admit of being so caricatured by an artful buffoon, as to afford sport to the multitudes who seek their pleasures at a playhouse. As in the early days of Christianity, the *pagani*, or peasantry, inhabiting the villages, were the last to hear the Gospel, and thus gave the name of pagans to all who were not Christians, the rural part of our isle was, through all the reign of Edward, pagan. It may, indeed, be justly questioned, whether some of our villages have ever heard the truth which is essential to salvation, since they have been inhabited by man. Certainly at no one time were the pure doctrines of the cross ever preached through all the land. It is melancholy to see the prelates, who are most renowned as martyrs for the Reformation, busied, during this most favourable period, in persecuting those whom they called their reformed brethren, and occupied with a political conversion of the country, by royal mandates and visitations; when they might have foreseen that their time would be short, and should have filled the

kingdom with the pure preaching of the Gospel, which would have rescued many from guilty superstitions, and perhaps have prevented the changes Mary afterwards effected. But the bishops seem to have thought that men were made Christians by act of parliament.

As Edward VI. was succeeded by Mary, a bigotted papist, many of the reformers drank deeply of the bitter cup of persecution, which they had been too ready to mingle for others. Cranmer having concurred in an attempt to exclude the queen from the throne, gave her a plausible reason for wreaking on him the revenge that was sweet to her taste. If any part of his history decisively proves the reality of his religion, it is his death. But Latimer, who had never been recalled to his bishoprick, during all the reign of Edward, when such bishops were peculiarly needed, lived as a genuine successor of the apostles, and died with the unsullied honours of a martyr. Hooper, the first Puritan, was next in excellence, and in this period, twenty-six clergymen, including five bishops, were burned alive, and two hundred and eighty persons died martyrs for the Protestant faith. It may, perhaps, be asked, why so small a proportion of the sufferers was found among the clergy, who should have appeared foremost in the ranks, and why so great a majority of the victims were people of the lower classes. The answer is, that, not the new converts in the reign of Edward, but the original Wickliffites furnished the martyrs. The deaths of the Protestants were, however, in the highest degree honourable to themselves, and their profession; for the fiery furnace evidently purified their spirits. Their lives were not thrown away, but it was with a prophetic spirit one of

them said, "The burning of our bodies will kindle a light, which by the grace of God, none of our enemies shall be able to extinguish." Though, at first, the careless multitude beheld with sufficient indifference these tragedies; in the following reigns, the Protestants improved them to excite such a horror of popery, as no artifice or power could afterwards surmount.

Elizabeth succeeded to the throne, and pushed down, with a touch, the edifice which her sister Mary had laboured to cement with blood. The new queen, however, proved herself the genuine child of Henry; for she commenced by forbidding her subjects to be reformed sooner, and closed with prohibiting them to reform further than she chose. After deliberating several weeks, she restored the reading of King Edward's liturgy, with the Epistles and Gospels in English. The parliament, shortly after, gave to Elizabeth, by the act of supremacy, that authority in the church, which her father wrested from the Pope. Into this act was introduced a clause empowering her to erect a court, infamous to posterity, by the name of the high commission, where, not a jury of peers, but commissioners appointed by the crown, took cognizance of religion. As all ecclesiastical persons were obliged to swear to her Majesty's supremacy, the conscientious Papists were reduced to the necessity of abandoning their situations in the establishment; but, of some thousands, no more than two hundred and forty-three had sufficient regard for truth and conscience to make this costly sacrifice*. Yet as these were, in all probability, the best of the

* Neale's History of the Puritans, vol. i. 145. New edit.

party, what can we think of those who retained their livings, and of the establishment that contained so many, who, after having been reconciled to the holy see under Mary, now relapsed to Protestantism, at the beck of Elizabeth?

A difference of sentiment soon appeared among the reformed themselves. When, during the persecutions of Mary's reign, many English exiles fled to the Protestant countries on the Continent, they formed a church at Frankfort. Availing themselves of the opportunity to carry the Reformation farther than the British court had hitherto allowed, they abandoned the surplice and the responses of the English liturgy, and chose for their pastor the celebrated John Knox. But, when a fresh party of refugees arrived from England, Dr. Cox, who had been tutor to King Edward, offended at the rejection of the liturgy, which he had assisted to compose*, disturbed the worship, by answering aloud after the minister. The following Lord's day, one of his partisans ascended the pulpit, and, without the consent of the congregation, read the English service. When, not only the church and its pastor, but the magistrates of Frankfort, protested against this imperious innovation, Dr. Cox resorted to the ungenerous artifice of accusing Knox as an enemy to the emperor, because the reformer had, some years before, when he owed no allegiance to that prince, said in one of his writings, that the emperor was as great an enemy to Christ as was Nero. Knox and his party being thus compelled to leave Frankfort, their opponents, shortly after, divided among themselves†. The differences generated in

* Heylin's Hist. of Pres. 240.

† Fuller, b. viii. p. 30.

exile were kept alive, when the accession of Elizabeth invited the refugees to return to their native land.

King Edward's liturgy was revised by order of government, and though, to please Elizabeth, it was made less decidedly Protestant, on the 24th of June, 1559, it was established by law, in virtue of an "Act for the Uniformity of Common Prayer." A clause was inserted, empowering the queen to ordain further ceremonies, and, but for this reserve of power to herself, she told Archbishop Parker she would not have passed the act. This statute of uniformity, rigidly enforced, agitated the Church of England, for nearly a century, and defiled it with the foulest stain which can disgrace a religious body—the blood of dissentients.

The English establishment was now settled upon nearly its present form; but there was a considerable number of the ministers who officiated in the church without approving of its regulations. Hence, those who wished to see a religion more pure from the relics of the ancient superstition received the name of Puritans, which, Fuller observes, "can hardly be a title of reproach in the esteem of those who profess to follow the minister, with a *pure* heart and humble voice*." The majority of the Puritans merely sought permission to abstain from what their consciences disapproved; but others reviled the Romish garments and rites, with all the rudeness of the times.

Elizabeth, watching for the church of which she was the supreme head, published fifty-three injunctions to her loving subjects, ordaining that priests and deacons shall not marry without leave of the bishop and two

* Book ix., p. 76.

justices of the peace; nor bishops, without allowance of their metropolitan and the queen's commissioners; nor any keep abused images or pictures in their houses. What a specimen of the liberty of the times, when a man durst not marry as he pleased, nor keep what pictures he chose in his own house! But as Elizabeth affected to glory in the title of the Virgin Queen, it was with the utmost difficulty she could be brought to endure married clergymen*. Private and family prayers were discouraged, that all worship might be performed within consecrated walls, where her majesty moulded every thing to her will.

The Convocation, in the year 1562, considered the propriety of some further reformation; and had it not been for the votes of absentees, who could not hear the arguments, the Puritans might have been relieved from those superstitions, which were a burden to their consciences. Failing in these attempts, and hating to see themselves so much like popish priests, the puritan clergy took the liberty to officiate frequently without the appointed habits. But as this contempt of her ecclesiastical supremacy was an unpardonable sin in the eyes of the queen, the London clergy were summoned to appear before the ecclesiastical commission. The bishop's chancellor thus addressed them—"My masters, and ye ministers of London, the council's pleasure is, that ye strictly keep the unity of apparel, like this man (pointing to a Mr. Cole in full uniform), with a square cap, a scholar's gown priest-like, a tippet, and, in the church, a linen surplice. Ye that will subscribe write *volo*; those who will not, write *nolo*." On attempting

* Warner, vol. ii., p. 426.

to speak, they were commanded to hold their peace and while sixty-one out of a hundred subscribed, acknowledging that it wounded their consciences, thirty-seven chose rather to starve*. But, regardless of reasons, Archbishop Parker and the ecclesiastical commission, obliged every one who had cure of souls to swear obedience to all the queen's injunctions; to all letters from the lords of the privy council; to the injunctions of their metropolitans; and the mandates of their bishop, archdeacons, chancellors, somners, and receivers. At length, a fourth part of the ministers were suspended; among whom were the principal preachers, at a time when not one minister in six could compose a sermon. Many of the churches were shut up, especially in London†; and frequently, when the congregation was assembled, the minister was forbidden to preach, by the bishop's spies, who were sent to see that the clergy strictly conformed. This inflamed the hatred of the people against the habits and ceremonies; so that the populace demolished crucifixes, monuments, and painted windows, pouring contempt on those who wore the habits.

But Grindall, Bishop of London, condemned the spirit and conduct of the court party, and showed the Puritans all possible favour‡. The university of Cambridge displayed the same liberality§, by exercising its peculiar privilege, to authorize ministers to preach throughout England, without licenses from the bishops. Many of the deprived ministers, who thirsted to diffuse the knowledge of Christ, travelled through the country,

* Neale, vol. i., p. 189. Pierce's Vindication of the Dissenters, p. 57.

† Warner, vol. ii., p. 435.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid., p. 436.

and preached, wherever they could find access to a pulpit.

In the year 1567, there was discovered in London a separate congregation, which seems to have been formed at a much earlier period. During the persecutions of Mary, some Protestants had determined to keep themselves pure from the papal communion, by abstaining from the established worship, and meeting together as a church, whenever they could with safety. Finding, on the accession of Elizabeth, that the mass of the clergy were the same who had before conformed to popery, many of whom were stained with the blood of the martyrs, the Puritans continued to worship as a separate body. A meeting of a hundred persons in the Plumber's hall was discovered, and ten of them were brought before the bishop*. Every day widened the breach. Mr. Cartwright of Cambridge, the most elegant Latin writer among the Puritans, presented to the parliament an admonition, pleading for further reformation. This produced a controversy between him and Whitgift†, which exalted the advocate for high church to the see of Canterbury, and drove Cartwright into exile. The Puritans perceiving that, although the parliament, especially in the lower house, was favourable to their cause, there were no hopes of escaping the tyrannical impositions of the queen and her bishops, came to this resolution, "That it was their duty, in the present circumstances, to separate from the public churches, and to worship God according to their conscience‡."

* Pierce, p. 63—65.

† Heylin's Hist. of Presbyterians, p. 262. Fuller, book ix., p. 103.
Pierce, p. 86.

‡ Warner, vol. ii., p. 456.

They formed a presbytery at Wandsworth, near London; and though, at first, some of them objected only to the habits of the clergy and to parts of the liturgy, while others condemned the whole fabric of the hierarchy, at length, the two streams uniting, says Fuller, "Nonconformity bore a large channel in the city of London*." As the Presbyterians insisted that their discipline was of divine institution, the prelates now began to maintain, that Episcopacy was not merely a provision of the state, but an ordinance of God, derived from the apostles.

About this period, however, arose a new species of Puritans, the Independents, called, at first, Brownists, who denied, not only the divine right of Episcopacy, but even the claims of the Establishment to the title of a true church. Some Dutch Anabaptists, at this time, convicted of heresy, were condemned to the flames; and though Fox, the martyrologist, wrote to the queen a persuasive letter in elegant Latin†, she steeled

* Fuller, book ix., p. 103.

† To record the intercession of this genuine disciple of Christ in behalf of men whose principles he condemned, is an honour due to his memory. "I understand," says he, "there are some foreigners in England condemned for heretical doctrines, and one or two of them doomed, unless reserved by your clemency, shortly to be burned. In which I perceive two things to be noticed, the wickedness of their error, and the severity of their punishment. Their error, indeed, no sound mind can defend; for I wonder how such monstrous opinions could enter the mind of any Christian. Yet such is the infirmity of human nature, that if divine light be at all withdrawn, into what absurdities do we not rush? I think such errors should by no means be encouraged, but suppressed by suitable restraints. Yet to burn alive the bodies of the miserable, creatures with fire and flames, pitch and sulphur, because they have erred, rather by the darkness of their understanding than the impiety of their passions, seems cruelty, more after the example of Rome than the practice of the Gospel; and unless it had originated with Innocent III. and the spirit of the Popes, this brazen bull had never been introduced into the

her heart against the voice of mercy, and, in defiance of the tenderness of her sex, burned them alive in Smithfield.

Towards the Puritans, also, she grew more severe. From serious argument, the two parties recurred to satirical pamphlets, of which those signed Martin Mar Prelate were the most keen, and drew forth the greatest number of replies. Perceiving that the spirit of religion suffered by such hostilities, the respectable Puritans condemned this mode of defence. The queen's officers made strict searches for the private presses at which these satires were printed, but as they were moved from one town and county to another, they were not easily discovered. The most iniquitous laws were enacted against the liberty of the press; and though the rights of Englishmen were invaded by servile parliaments, frightened by the imperious threats of a woman, yet the severities of the bishops against the Puritans outraged all law*. By a statute passed in the thirty-fifth year of Elizabeth, for the punishment of

merciful church of Christ. Though I am not pleased with the criminals nor their errors, yet, as I am a man, I favour the life of men, not that they may be allowed to err, but may have opportunity to repent. I would even spare the brute creation, and never see them slaughtered without uneasiness, and admiring the mercy of God, that, when he ordered them to be sacrificed, he commanded their blood to be poured out at the foot of the altar, that they might not be tortured by being burnt alive. Allow me, therefore, to intreat your majesty to spare the lives of these persons, if you can (and what cannot your authority in these cases effect?), or at least let their punishment be changed: might they not be imprisoned, banished, or even hung? but, I beseech you, suffer not the long-extinguished fires of Smithfield to be again re-kindled. But if that cannot be obtained, I appeal to the compassions of your breast, by every consideration, to spare them, at least a month or two, that God may recover them from their dangerous errors, lest, with the destruction of their bodies, their souls also go to eternal perdition." Fuller, book ix., p. 104.

* Warner, vol. ii., p. 442.

persons obstinately refusing to come to church, those who would not conform were banished, and sentenced to death if they escape from banishment. At length, the dominant party seized the opportunity of drinking the blood of their enemies. Several Puritans were executed*, and though Elizabeth appeared to feel some compunction, when she learned that they died, solemnly declaring their loyalty, and praying for the life and government of the queen; we ask in vain for the reformation, which repentance should produce in order to prove itself sincere.

In addition to the contest concerning the Popish habits, the Puritans suffered for differing from the ruling party on points of doctrine. They denied that Christ descended into hell, which the bishops maintained; though, at the present day, even bishops themselves will own that these confessors suffered for being wiser than their contemporaries, and understanding the original language of the Scriptures better than their superiors. They were also persecuted for maintaining the morality of the Christian Sabbath †, at a time when all serious persons will own that it needed some advocate, for several lives were lost at a bear-baiting, on the Lord's-day, near London.

Amidst all these contentions for forms and doctrines, the mass of the clergy were below contempt. In ten thousand parishes, there were but few preachers. A

* Fuller, book ix., p. 169. Pierce's Vindication of Dissenters, p. 145—7.

† This will hardly be imputed to them as a fault by those who, on hearing the command, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," utter the response in the Liturgy, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law."

petition presented to parliament complained that, to fill up the place of the expelled Puritans, the bishops made priests of the basest of the people. In a survey of different counties, a large proportion of the clergy are marked as drunkards, dicers, and burnt in the hand for felony. Bishop Sandys observes, that "Many people could not hear a sermon, for seven years; and while they perished for lack of knowledge, their blood would lie at somebody's door."

Yet, amidst this dearth of instruction, when England was fast returning to Rome, Elizabeth prohibited the "prophesyings" of the clergy, for which archbishop Grindall pleaded in a manner honourable to his memory, though to the loss of his credit at court *. To go to a place of worship twice on a Lord's-day, and spend the evening in domestic worship and instruction, was the mark of a Puritan.

At length, Elizabeth departed, to give an account of her administration, at a higher tribunal. Warner has justly pronounced her a tyrant, who violated the laws by which she held her crown. That the tenderness of her sex had no place in her breast, the cruelties she exercised, the blood she shed, too clearly prove. When she first jested at signing the warrant for the execution of Mary, queen of Scots, and afterwards mourned most tragically for her death, the laughter and the tears were alike detestable †. As to her religion, she abjured nothing in popery but submission to a higher authority than her own, and was no farther a Protestant than was necessary to make herself a pope. She had images, and a cruci-

* Fuller, book ii., p. 123. Warner, vol. ii., p. 448.

† Robertson's History of Scotland, vol. ii., p. 168—178.

fix, with lighted candles, in her own chapel; and when her chaplain preached against the sign of the cross, she called out to him, "Desist from that ungodly digression, and go on with your text." An enemy to preaching, she scarcely ever heard a sermon, and used to say, one or two preachers in a county were enough. A life spent in defiance of the genuine spirit of religion was closed without its consolations; while the gloom which hung over her later days was aggravated by seeing her courtiers turn round to worship James, the rising sun: she expired March 24th, 1603, in the seventieth year of her age, and the forty-fifth of her reign.

As the successor of Elizabeth was James, king of Scotland, who had been educated in Presbyterian principles, the English prelates dreaded what they called the Scotch mist. For to the Presbyterians of Scotland he had said, "I thank God that I am king of the sincerest kirk in the world; sincerer than the kirk of England, whose service is an ill-said mass in English: it wants nothing of the mass but the liftings," meaning the elevation of the host*. Yet, at that moment, he was cherishing a deadly hatred for the Presbyterian establishment, which had offended his majesty, as he owned, on his arrival in England, by presuming to contradict him to his face, and attempting to reduce him, together with the whole nation, to obedience to their discipline. While he was making hypocritical professions, he was carrying on a correspondence with the English nobles and bishops, and promising to continue the very liturgy which he derided as an ill-said mass †. For Queen

* Calderwood, p. 286. Robertson, vol. ii., p. 204—8.

† Burnet's History of his Own Times, vol. i., p. 7, 8.

Elizabeth and her courtiers had seen through this shallow monarch, and discovered, as Burnet says *, "That he was either inclined to turn Papist, or to be of no religion."

On his entrance into this land of promise, as he termed it, the Puritans met him by the way, and presented to him a petition, called the *Millennary*, as it professed to convey the wishes of a thousand ministers, for further reformation. The universities, alarmed at these applications, opposed them by an angry reply, and a threatening decree. Cartwright, the famous literary champion, presented to James a Latin commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes, gratefully acknowledging his obligations to his majesty, who had formerly nominated him to the divinity chair in the university of St. Andrew's.

But to get rid of his old friends with a good grace, and display to advantage his fancied skill in theological disputation, James appointed a conference between the high church party and the Puritans, to be held at Hampton-court. The disputants on both sides were nominated by the king, with the advice of his *privy* council. For the establishment, there were eight bishops, and as many deans; to whom we may add the king and the lords of his council. The Puritans had but four advocates. However unfair this disproportion may appear, was it not a high compliment to these champions, or their cause, to match them against such a host? James, instead of acting as dignified moderator, was eager to prove that he had called the conference, to please the bishops, by brow-beating the

* Burnet's History of his Own Times, vol. i., pp. 7, 8.

Puritans. The advocates for things as they were, showed plainly enough that they were in the secret, and behaved like men who were not called to produce their reasons, but to display their authority. Regardless of the apostolic canon, that a bishop should not be soon angry, Bancroft flew into a passion with Dr. Reynolds, divinity professor at Oxford, the principal advocate for the Puritans, and protested that a schismatic ought not to be allowed to speak against his bishop. While Sir Edward Peyton confessed that the Puritans, not having liberty of speech, saw that they might as well be silent, the bishops were in raptures with their king, and declared, that, for learning and piety, he was the Solomon of his age. Bancroft, bishop of London, falling down on his knees, said, "My heart melteth for joy, that Almighty God, of his singular mercy, hath given us such a king, as, since Christ's time, the like hath not been." His grace of Canterbury, charmed with the wisdom of this Solomon, exclaimed, "Undoubtedly your majesty speaks by the special assistance of the Spirit of God." The head which wore the crown was too weak to bear the intoxicating fumes of such incense; and as the Puritans were no match for the prelatical party in tossing the censer with courtly air, James ended the conference, by declaring that he would make them conform, or hurry them out of the land, or do worse.

Other writers have given a different colouring to some parts of this scene, affirming that, on one of the days of debate, the king himself played the Puritan to such lengths, that the bishops, on their knees, entreated him not to alter anything, lest it should be thought they

had unjustly persecuted men for non-conformity. It is evident, however, that the convocation, which met this year, were well assured of his majesty's favour; for they ventured to publish one hundred and forty-one canons, which were afterwards ratified by his letters patent; but not being sanctioned by parliament they bind the clergy only. Bancroft, exalted to the see of Canterbury, persecuted the Puritans with such fury, that a contemporary writer has observed, "In this year three hundred ministers were suspended, deprived, excommunicated, imprisoned, or forced to leave the country." Mr. Parker having published a treatise against the sign of the cross in baptism, was answered by a royal proclamation, offering a reward for his apprehension.

But, with all the injury which the Puritans suffered from the conference at Hampton Court, they have the honour of procuring there the translation of the Bible, which is in present use. When Dr. Reynolds, in the name of his brethren, requested that this work might be undertaken, the Bishop of London replied, "If every man's humour were followed, there would be no end of translating." The king, however, approving of the proposal, a committee of divines was appointed to undertake the work*.

King James bent all his authority to bring his mother-kirk, which he had declared the purest in the world, to adopt what he had before called popish, or

* The words church, bishop, Easter, and infidel, are managed with some art; though it is rather curious, that, to make the apostles bishops, a bishopric is given to Judas Iscariot [Acts i. 20]; and, to gain the name of church to a building, it is applied to idolatrous temples [Acts xix. 37]; in a way that no unbiassed scholar would, by translating the original words, approve.

Anglicane episcopacy. Returning from his tour to Scotland, he was grieved to see his English subjects keeping the Sabbath too strictly, so that he published a declaration to encourage sports on the Lord's-day; though he had before ratified the articles of the church of Ireland, in which the morality of the Sabbath is asserted. The declaration for Sunday sports, drawn up by Bishop Moreton, recommends dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May-games, Whitsun ales, morrice dances, setting up May-poles, and carrying rushes into the churches*.

Ireland, however, received some benefits during this reign. The colonies of Scotch Presbyterians, who settled in that country, carried with them a large portion of knowledge and religion; and the venerable Usher diffused a spirit of piety and moderation, which formed a striking contrast to the violence and bigotry of the prelates in the other parts of the empire.

The famous gunpowder-plot, which rendered the Papists odious to the nation at large, frightened James into lenity towards the priests, and offers for reconciliation with Rome, by meeting half-way†. As this project had no charms for any but himself, the parliament often pressed him to execute the laws against Papists, and on one occasion, presented to him a list of fifty-seven popish lords and knights, who were in the principal offices of government‡. Because the principles of the Calvinistic Puritans were thought peculiarly opposed to popery, the court began to cherish Arminianism, and Laud was made Bishop of St. David's§.

* Fuller, b. x., p. 74.

‡ Ibid. p. 506.

† Warner, vol. ii., p. 486.

§ Ibid. pp. 493, 504.

The king being at the same time engaged in disputes with his parliaments, who refused to submit to his prerogative, as paramount to all law, those members who maintained, with most zeal, the rights and liberties of Britons were branded with the name of state Puritans. These may be considered as the first Whigs, the fathers of that party in the legislature which has since espoused the popular branch of our constitution, in opposition to those who would render the prerogative, or the influence of the crown, absolute.

A preacher at Oxford, having maintained in his sermon the right of the people to resist a tyrannical king, the university passed a decree, "That it is not lawful for subjects to appear in arms against their king, on the score of religion, or on any other account." "But to bind the nation down, for ever, to such slavish principles," says Warner, "all the graduates were obliged to swear, 'that they will always continue of the same opinion.'" It seems to have been the determination of Archbishop Bancroft to crush the religion of the Puritans, and the liberties of the nation.

While secretly conniving at popery, in defiance of the most solemn protestations to his parliament; while giving vogue to the new doctrines of Arminianism, in opposition to the system of the English and Scotch churches; James yet pretended to be such a zealot for the ancient creed, that he burned alive an Arian. Shortly after, another endured the same horrid fate. A third would have followed to the flames, but the deaths of the former having produced an unfavourable impression on the public mind, he was suffered to wait for death in the silence and gloom of a prison*.

* Fuller, book x., p. 64.

The Supreme Governor of the world opposed some checks to the ruinous tendency of affairs. Bancroft was succeeded in the see of Canterbury by Abbot, whose benevolent disposition adorned his ministry, while his generous attachment to its liberties endeared him to his country. He had ever treated the Puritans as mildly as he durst; and at length he openly opposed the court, by forbidding his clergy to read the declaration for Sunday sports, and by opposing the new theology of Laud and his party. But, having accidentally killed a man, while hunting in the New Forest of Hampshire, Abbot retired from public life, and, not suiting the court, was in future neglected*.

Prince Henry, the eldest son of James, was snatched from the hopes of a nation, whose partiality for the virtuous, intelligent, and magnanimous youth, roused the jealous father to ask, "Will you bury me alive†?" But, after his death, the king's daughter, Elizabeth, was married to the Elector Palatine of the Rhine, from whom descended the dynasty which now sways the British sceptre. The Puritans, who had expressed high satisfaction in the match, felt proportionate affliction, when their favourite princes were driven from the throne of Bohemia, and from the electorate, by the house of Austria. While James, who was courageous, only to oppress the unresisting, rendered himself contemptible by the desertion of his daughter and her husband, the dissenters of that day urged their restoration to the throne, by the arms of Britain, and promoted subscriptions for their relief and support‡.

Contrary to the fears of pious men, the measures of

* Fuller, book x., p. 64.

† Warner, p. 498.

‡ Neale's History of the Puritans, vol. ii., p. 94.

James's reign were rather favourable than injurious to religion. Those who retained an attachment to Calvinism, which was considered as the doctrine of the reformation; and those who were friends to the constitution, in opposition to the absolute power of the king, were thrown into one common mass, called Puritans; who were, by the impolitic measures of James, daily becoming more numerous and popular. The persecuted Puritans were received into the houses of the independent gentlemen of the country, as tutors to their children. Those who fled from the cruelties of Bancroft, imitated the Christians at the persecution which arose about Stephen, by diffusing their principles to the ends of the earth. The sentiments of the Presbyterians and Independents travelled, with the exiles, to the continent of America, and thus acquired an extension far beyond that of the church of England*.

At length, James died, not without strong suspicions of poison†. His character has appeared too clearly for his fame. While under the discipline of the Scotch kirk, he was decent in his conduct; but when converted to the English establishment, he abandoned himself to luxury and licentiousness. His language was obscene, and his actions very often lewd and indecent‡. He was both a swearer and a drunkard; but when he recovered from his intoxication, he wept like a child, and said he hoped God would not impute to him his infirmities.

His deep-rooted hatred to a Presbyterian church is no inexplicable mystery, when we read in the minutes of

* Burnet's Own Times, vol. i., p. 17.

† Warner, vol. iii., p. 507.

‡ Mosheim, cent. 17, sect. 1.

one of the assemblies at Edinburgh, that three ministers were sent to confer with his majesty on the following subjects: "That they are grieved to find, that the reading of the word at his table, and the saying of grace before and after meat, is omitted; that they request his majesty to resort to sermons, on week-days; and that he would forbear to talk with others during the sermon: they recommend to his majesty, privy meditations with God and his conscience, as he is blotted with swearing, and the courtiers imitate his example*." While the absurdity of the attempt to drill a whole nation into the appearance of a Christian church became manifest, by the conduct of his majesty and the court, Burnet owns, that the Presbyterians had peculiar reasons for treating James with jealous vigilance. No enemy to his memory could wish him to appear in a worse light than that in which he is placed by this moderate prelate.

Charles I. succeeded to the ungrateful inheritance of contracted views, arbitrary principles, an exhausted treasury, and a dissatisfied people. His father had sharpened for him the fatal axe, of which he knew not how to avert the stroke. But he ascended the throne with popular applause. He was, at first, thought to favour the Puritans, as Dr. Preston, the head of that party, came up to London in the coach with him, on his accession†; but he married the French king's daughter, a seducing Papist, "whose entrance into the kingdom," says Bishop Kennet, "was more fatal than the plague‡."

Differences early arose between the king and the

* Petrie.

† Burnet's Own Times, vol. i., p. 19.

‡ Neale, vol. ii., p. 150.

parliament. Mr. Montague had, in the preceding reign, pretended to repel the attack of a Popish priest; but, in the opinion of all zealous Protestants, had betrayed the church of England, and defended nothing but Arminianism. This drew upon him the censure of the indignant parliament, from whose sentence he appealed to Cæsar, with so much effect, that, though the legislature had pronounced him unworthy of the ministry, Charles raised him to a bishopric*.

The germ of all the mighty mischiefs of this reign was Laud, who was born at Reading, educated on a charitable foundation at Oxford, and after having halted between Protestants and Papists, was exalted to the see of Canterbury. He seemed to study how far he could go towards Rome, without being a Papist; and how absolutely he could reign over kingdoms, without exchanging his mitre for a crown. At the coronation of Charles, he introduced some additional ceremonies, and said to his majesty, "As you see the clergy come nearer the altar than others, so remember that you give them greater honour." He would have forced his idol, Arminianism, upon the convocation; but being better advised, he procured a private conference, which, like that at Hampton Court, was not designed to elicit truth, but to enforce the reigning creed; so that it was archly observed, no one returned thence an Arminian who went thither a Calvinist†.

The king, finding his parliaments hostile to Arminianism, popery, and arbitrary power, studied to govern without them, but was prevented, by want of troops, from throwing off the mask, and rendering himself

* Fuller, book ii., p. 119. Warner, p. 510.

† Ibid. book ii., p. 125.

absolute. By various illegal acts he extorted money from his subjects; and as the Puritans were peculiarly hateful to the primate, they were fined in the Star Chamber, till many of them were reduced from affluence to beggary*. Preachers were employed by the court to exalt the king's prerogative, to the ruin of the constitution. Dr. Sibthorp, in an assize sermon, affirmed, that, "if princes command anything which the subjects may not perform, because it is against the laws of God or nature, or impossible, subjects are bound to undergo the punishments, without resisting or reviling." The king was so pleased with this, that he ordered Archbishop Abbot to license the sermon for the press; but he had too much honesty and religion to consent, for which he was banished to an unhealthy part of the country. Warner says, "I shall make no remarks on this single instance of despotic arbitrary power, when the whole nation was treated as a conquered province."

The king imitated his father, both in publishing a royal declaration to encourage dancing, masks, and interludes, on the Lord's day; and in disgusting his Scotch subjects, by forcing upon them bishops, and a liturgy, which they dreaded more than the plague. In a visit to Scotland, Laud displayed all the foppery of Rome, on a stage where it was treated with ridicule, and induced his majesty to enforce the new religion with severities, which added to that ridicule an unconquerable horror and detestation.

It was now becoming every day more difficult, and

* As St. Paul's cathedral was repaired at this time, the fines were aggravated to meet the expense, which gave birth to the saying, that "The church was built with the sins of the people."

less important, to distinguish between the church of England and that of Rome. Though it is not proved that Laud wished to re-unite the two churches, it is evident that he was even more compliant than James, who wished to meet half-way; for our Protestant archbishop seemed mad after something like the Gallican Church, which should possess all the splendor of Popery, with the peculiar advantage of absolute submission to the bishops, instead of the pope. The Lord's Supper had hitherto been celebrated in the midst of the churches, at a table, which Laud now ordered to be removed, and placed as an altar against the east wall, fenced round with a rail, to keep the profane laity at an awful distance. The people were solemnly instructed in the sacred duty of paying reverence, on entering and leaving the consecrated buildings; of bowing to the altar, which Laud said was the only place on earth where God resided; and of doing homage to the clergy, who were to be called priests.

Such encouragement was given to Papists, that they abounded through the kingdom; and when Laud asked the daughter of the earl of Devon why she turned Catholic, she replied, "Because I hate to travel in a crowd, and as I see you and your party making such haste towards Rome, I determined to go before you." Dr. Cozens was accused by the Parliament, of setting up, in the cathedral of Durham, a marble altar with cherubim; a cope with the Trinity, God the Father being represented as an old man; and a crucifix with the image of Christ, who was adorned with a red beard and a blue cap. Cozens was also charged with lighting up two hundred tapers at the altar, on Candlemas-day, and procuring a consecrated knife to cut the sacramental bread.

But all who opposed these new beauties of holiness, were persecuted with the utmost severity. Dr. Leighton, the father of the celebrated archbishop, being brought into the Star Chamber, for publishing "An Appeal to the Parliament, or Zion's Plea against Prelacy," received a sentence which induced Laud to pull off his cap and give God thanks. That we may justly appreciate his lordship's devotion, he has recorded in his diary, the sentence. "His ears were cut off, his nose slit, his face branded with burning irons; he was tied to a post, and whipped with a treble cord, of which every lash brought away his flesh. He was kept in the pillory, near two hours, in frost and snow." He was then imprisoned, with peculiar severity, for about eleven years, and when released by the parliament, he could neither hear, nor see, nor walk.

In the year 1637, an infamous tragedy was acted in the treatment of a divine, a lawyer, and a physician, whose names were Burton, Prynne, and Bastwick. They had been imprisoned for libels, but were now accused of publishing new reflections on the bishops. Unable to procure counsel, and forbidden to plead their own cause, they were condemned to stand in the pillory, where their ears were cut off; and as Prynne had before suffered this indignity, the stumps of his ears were barbarously mangled*, by which, the temporal artery being cut, the blood flowed down in streams.

Who can wonder that our much injured forefathers

* Fuller, book xi., p. 155.—who also records, that when Prynne was branded on the cheek with S. L. for slanderous libeller, he made the following distich :

Stigmata maxillis referens, insignia Laudis,
Exultans remeo victima grata Deo.

should now turn their eyes towards other lands, and address each other thus? "The sun shines as pleasantly on America as on England, and the Sun of Righteousness much more clearly. We are treated here in a manner which forfeits all claim upon our affection. The church of England has added to the ceremonies and habits of popery, the only marks of antichrist which were wanting, corruption of doctrine, and a bloody persecution of the saints. Let us remove whither the providence of God calls, and make that our country, which will afford us what is dearer than property or life, the liberty of worshipping God in the way which appears to us most conducive to our eternal welfare*." In twelve years of Laud's administration, four thousand Puritans became planters in America; and Neale affirms, that he had a list of seventy-seven divines ordained in the church of England, who became pastors of emigrant churches in America, before the year 1640. These persecutions drained England of half a million of money, which was then an immense sum; and had the same infatuated councils continued, the fourth part of the moveable property of the country would, in a dozen years, have been transferred to America. For, when it was ascertained that the exiles could live in their new settlements, multitudes were eager to leave, as they said, the Egypt of bondage for the land of Goshen. But they were then forbidden to leave a country from which their affections had been alienated.

We may, however, give the rulers credit for sincere

* Neale, vol. ii. p. 207.

repentance, if, as has been affirmed, the celebrated Hampden and Oliver Cromwell were, by this prohibition, obliged to remain in England. For the king having proceeded to imprison the members of parliament, many who were attached to the church of England, cast their eyes towards America, as the asylum of civil liberty. It is not our task to record the struggle between Charles and the Parliament. Laud was brought to the block; episcopacy was abolished; an assembly of divines, which was convoked at Westminster, framed a directory for worship, which superseded the prayer-book; and the Scotch army being called to the assistance of the parliament, presbytery was established, which would have been as intolerant as the episcopal church, had not the Independents, with a singular union of courage and address, seized the sword of state.

At length, the unhappy Charles fell a victim to the destructive measures of his reign. On him were avenged the accumulated injuries, which his predecessors had contributed to inflict. His manners were more decent than his father's; and his politics no worse than those of Elizabeth. A clergyman of singular moderation observes, "That it is absurd to call him a martyr, for there was too great a complication of causes which led to his execution, to ascribe it wholly, or principally, to religion. The vice which ruined him was insincerity; so that his enemies saw they could not trust him to perform his insincere, though liberal promises*."

As the courtiers had been so impolitic as to brand,

* Warner, p. 576. Conformists' Plea for the Non-conformists.

for Puritans all who refused to surrender the liberties of the country to the will of the monarch, they afterwards charged the Puritans with the death of the king. But a beneficed clergyman, who published a plea for the Non-conformists, when they were suffering all the vengeance of the restoration, affirms, that Calamy, Marshall, Whitaker, Sedgwick, and Ash, eminent Presbyterian ministers, when consulted, declared that the army disapproved of the design of putting the king to death. Forty-seven others of their brethren protested against the measure; for which they were threatened by the leaders of the army. Sixty ministers in Essex, and fifty-four of those of Lancashire, who were the most rigid Puritans*, declared against the execution of Charles. The same writer says, "a reverend and learned doctor, now in good preferment, told me he was a witness of the late transactions; and he not long ago affirmed, that Oliver complained to him, that he and his council of officers could not go on with their designs against the king's life, because of the opposition of the Presbyterian ministers." The principal Independents, who preached before the parliament, at the time, when to applaud the execution of the king was the road to preferment, refused to say one word in its favour. The above writer affirms that disguised Jesuits instigated the deed. But why should we search for mysterious causes, when it is obvious to every eye, that the officers who led the army against the king, knowing he could never forgive them for conquering him, consulted their own safety, by cutting off their irreconcilable enemy?

* Neale. Pierce, p. 216.

The interregnum forms an important period in the ecclesiastical history of Britain. That church which had been reared by the wealth and power of the state, and cemented with the tears and blood of dissentients, was now hurled to the ground. As the parliament had induced the king to call a synod of divines, the senators wisely took care to make them know that they had no legislative power, but were invited to give advice when asked. Yet they struggled to enforce Presbyterian uniformity, and thus deprived themselves of all right to reflect on the bishops.

Laud and his admirers revile the assembly as an ignorant rabble of Brownists; but out of a hundred and fifty, there were only five Independent ministers, who were always distinguished as the dissenting brethren. Of their learning in that peculiar line in which to excel was their duty, and deficiency had been a crime, their theological works have furnished proofs sufficient to perpetuate their honour, as far as the English language shall extend. Though, like all other ecclesiastical assemblies, which pretend to dictate the religion of others, they were stained with what is no venial sin, attempts to encroach on the rights of conscience,—it must be owned, that they treated with fraternal regard the dissenting brethren, who published an apology for their independent sentiments.

The assembly fell into a great error, by pulling down episcopacy before they were prepared with the system which they intended to substitute. An inundation of sects rushed in to fill up the vacuum. But it is not probable that any circumstances would have induced the parliament to establish the system of the Presby-

terians as exclusively as they wished; for what was called the Rump Parliament, to their immortal honour, abolished all penal statutes for religion, and allowed every one to think and worship as he pleased, on taking an oath of allegiance to government*. This formed the constant complaint of the Presbyterians, and one of their ministers in London published what he called *Gangræna* †, or a Disclosure of the Church's Wounds, in which he inveighs bitterly against the various sects, dividing them into sixteen classes, which his spleen might have multiplied into as many dozens.

The episcopal clergy very generally conformed to the new establishment; for though they were forbidden to read the liturgy, they were at liberty to conform their own prayers to it as much as they pleased; but the conduct of the Long Parliament in prohibiting the use of the old form of prayer in *families*, was most iniquitous‡. It must, however, be remembered, that many held what may be called the conventicles of the church of England, and one of these meetings directly opposite to the house of Dr. Owen, while he was vice-chancellor of Oxford, he would never suffer to be disturbed§.

The money raised by the sale of cathedral lands was vested in the hands of trustees, and a part of it appropriated to the support of those bishops, deans, and other clergymen, who had been deprived of their means of support. A fifth of the income of livings was afterwards devoted to the relief of the ejected incumbents. For, in consequence of incessant complaints concerning scandalous ministers, the parliament appointed a com-

* Warner, p. 579.

† Edwards's *Gangræna*.

‡ Warner.

§ Dr. Owen's Life.

mittee, called the Tryers, by whom many were ejected as unworthy to hold livings. That the political ferment of the times influenced the decisions of this committee is more than probable*; but to what degree learned and pious men suffered for their attachment to the king and the episcopal establishment has been disputed. It is, however, indisputable, that the episcopalians paid the highest compliment to the moderation and liberality which reserved to the former incumbents a portion of their incomes, by showing, at the restoration, that the conduct of the Puritans was too elevated and generous for their enemies to imitate.

Though the dominant party, at this era, are accused of vandalism, the parliament made a liberal donation to Trinity College, Dublin, and patronized learning in the sister kingdom with great zeal. Cromwell endowed a college at Durham, that young men from the north of the kingdom might not have to travel to Oxford and Cambridge. He gave a hundred a year to the support of a divinity professor at Oxford; presented some rare manuscripts to the Bodleian library; and permitted the

* Pierce, p. 204—214. Thomas Fuller, the author of the church history to which we have often referred, being known to be attached to the former order of things under the bishops, feared that he should find the tryers very severe. He therefore applied to Mr. Howe, who was an Independent, and one of Cromwell's chaplains, saying to him, "You see, sir, I am a fat man, and I have to pass through a narrow passage; I wish you would give me a push." Mr. Howe, who was constantly doing kind offices to those who differed from him, pleaded his cause with the committee, so that when Fuller appeared, and was asked the usual question, whether he had ever experienced a work of grace upon his heart, he only replied, "I can appeal to the Searcher of hearts that I make conscience of my very thoughts," and with this reply the committee was satisfied. While it was not a direct answer to the question, it places Fuller in an honourable light, and represents the committee as seeking not the shibboleth of a party, but the essence of religion.—*Howe's Life*, p. 7.

paper for Walton's polyglot bible to be imported free of duty. At the head of the university of Oxford was the celebrated Dr. Owen, a divine so eminent, that it may be justly questioned whether the kingdom has since produced his equal. Milton, the immortal bard, was the apologist of the commonwealth, and the Latin secretary of Cromwell.

The state of religion, during this period, who can fairly estimate? Those who are accurately acquainted with the productions of the men who flourished under the commonwealth, will reject with contempt the current tales of universal fanaticism; though, to us, the picture of wonderful piety, which others have given of this era, appears by far too highly coloured. The public fasts were numerous, and kept with singular strictness; but in our days it has been seen, that times of threatening danger will awe into a serious panic men who are far enough from making religion the business and bliss of their lives. The Lord's-day was never so honoured as at this period. The sermons published under the title of the morning exercises, as well as some others delivered before the parliament, by Presbyterian and Independent divines, may, for solid learning, theological acumen, scriptural knowledge, practical tendency, and popular eloquence, endure comparison with those of any bishop under the house of Stuart. The universities were then the temples of religion, as well as the groves of the muses.

But, when it is said, by Neale*, and some others, that "the great body of the people were at that time sincerely religious," we discover both undue partiality

* History of the Puritans.

for those days, and inattention to the real nature of religion. Heavy, and surely not unfounded, complaints are raised of the gross ignorance, and heathenish profligacy of multitudes, during the former reign; and, are we to suppose, that, in a period which was not long enough to furnish preachers for the whole kingdom, millions were converted? Was Britain transformed into a nation of Christians by the mere change of the governors, and of the leading fashion of the times?

There is undoubtedly some truth in the representations of Clarendon and his admirers, that hypocrisy and fanaticism contributed to form the character of that period. As the rulers were bent on drilling the nation into the form of godliness; open profaneness was stifled; and many were eager to conceal their real character, under the cloak of that serious profession which was the road to preferment, and the fashion of the times. For the same reason, many adopt the contrary hypocrisy of appearing more completely debauched than they really feel. But Dr. Owen frequently bewails, in his sermons, the restless impatience which many betrayed, under the moral restraints then imposed on their depraved inclinations.

There was, however, among all ranks, an unusual portion of religious knowledge. The Long Parliament was an assembly of divines. The preachers were labourers indeed, but unhappily cramped in their exertions, by a narrow, sectarian spirit, which caused them bitterly to oppose those in whose success they ought to have rejoiced. Not that it so much affected their preaching, as many have represented; for a conformist under Charles II. declares, “ In many hundreds of ser-

mons, I never heard their differences of sentiment; though one was considered a Presbyterian, another an Independent, and a third Episcopalian; nor was Calvin deified or preached, any further than as Christ spake in him*." In a word, with all the disadvantages of these times, it must be owned, that many who had abhorred the interregnum, and contributed with the warmest zeal to the restoration, afterwards bitterly deplored the loss of those days, which, when compared with the profligate reign of Charles II., may be called "the days of heaven upon earth."

At length, Cromwell was cited to appear before the Judge of all the earth. His character and religion have been considered an insoluble enigma. That regard for liberty of conscience, for which the Presbyterians hated him, now forms the surest basis of his fame†. His occasional severities towards the favourers of the church of England have been excused as just retaliation on those who were constantly plotting against his person and government‡; but he ought to have known to distinguish between the worshippers of God, and the subjects of the state. Cromwell's personal religion commenced before he had any public part to act; and while he was yet a member of the church of England, he was, like many others, branded as a Puritan, for his opposition to Arminian doctrines and arbitrary power. That his public station had not improved his character, he seems to have been himself conscious; for he speaks of having fallen from an eminence, to a state of religion inferior to many whom he knew and envied. His morals, however, are unimpeached§, except by slanderers,

* Preface to Conformists' Plea. † Warner, 592. ‡ Ib. 586. § Ib. 591.

who love accusations, but hate proofs; and if his profession of religion had been insincere, would he never have dropped the mask? His fanatical expressions, as they have been called, were the language of the day, which had become habitual to him, before he appeared on the public stage. What the historian of Philip II. says of that monarch's zeal for the Catholic religion, we may affirm of Cromwell's devotedness to the Protestant cause*,—"It was too steady, uniform, and ardent, to have been entirely hypocritical."

His chaplains were the most able and faithful men that England, or any other country, has ever known; the sermons they delivered to him were superior to any which crowned heads now hear; and Howe preached a discourse expressly to confute the notion of a particular faith in prayer, to which he knew the protector was attached. Though Cromwell may be thought to have favoured these divines, because they were the principal men among the Independents, and might serve his political purposes, Howe was too Catholic to be a partisan of that or any other opinion, which divides Christians; and Dr. Owen challenged all the world to prove that he had been active in setting up or pulling down any political party. Cromwell's chaplains are said to have declared, that God had promised them he should not die in that which proved his last illness; but this, and the story of his comforting himself on his death-bed

* Bishop Burnet has given a singular display of the unrivalled services which the Protector performed for the Protestant religion, and of the dread which the Pope and his partisans felt at the name of Cromwell. He says that King James gave this reason for turning to the Roman Catholic religion, because he found all the zealous Protestants great friends of Cromwell.—*Own Times*, p. 73.

with assurance of heaven, because he was once converted, are as void of probability as of proof.

Cromwell's ashes were scarcely cold before the officers of the army wrested the sceptre from the hands of Richard, his son and successor. When the Presbyterians had determined to invite the return of Charles and monarchy, general Monk dexterously fell in with the current, and secured to himself the praise and the reward. Charles was lavish of promises to forgive injuries, to grant liberty to tender consciences, and never to forget the services of the Presbyterians. To preserve appearances, ten divines of that persuasion were nominated as chaplains in ordinary, from whom he heard three sermons. The Book of Common Prayer was restored, and before the end of the year, those who refused to make use of it were harassed with severe prosecutions.

From the constrained decency of the commonwealth, all ranks now burst forth into the most profligate debaucheries. Patronized by the king, the stage presented scenes which might make a harlot blush. The lewdest intrigues were the whole business of the court†. To drink the king's health to beastly excess was the grand proof of loyalty. The Puritans wept over their country, now become like Sodom. Yet, where was the consistency of lamenting the ruins of the church of Christ, which still retained as many genuine members as before, except where death had thinned their ranks? Instead of conceiving that the nature of things was reversed, that the sun moved towards the east, and rivers flowed

* Burnet's Own Times, p. 93. Warner, vol. ii. p. 594.

back to their source, it was but an exemplification of the prophetic axiom, "the wicked will do wickedly." But when we hear the debauchees at the restoration revile all the Puritans as hypocrites, and insinuate that every appearance of superior morality must be deceit, we know not whether it should excite more indignant surprise or contemptuous ridicule. For who were the hypocrites? Those who, when the foaming polluted tide, which had been long pent up, broke down its mounds, and carried every thing else before it, still stood, like a rock, "among the faithless, faithful only they?" Those who, having professed attachment to pure and undefiled religion, while it enjoyed the smiles of the state, retained their profession when it cost them all that was dear to them in life? Or those who, having canted, as they would call it, when canting was in fashion, suddenly turned with the returning tide, and, from a demure appearance, outraged all decency, and treated religion itself as mere grimace? Yet these were the men who (perhaps to purge themselves from suspicion) flung about so profusely their accusations, which have been since retailed by a servile herd of imitators.

The complete failure of the scheme for giving dominion to religion, affords, however, an additional exposition of the Redeemer's words, "My kingdom is not of this world." To say nothing of the unpleasantness of the post, it may be questioned whether Gabriel would be equal to the task of ruling in Pandemonium; and as Christians must expect to be outnumbered in the ordinary state of the world, they should be thankful that they are not called to sway the sceptre of their

Redeemer, who alone is able to rule in the midst of his enemies. The influence of believers in the world must be by the gradual effects of the Gospel on the hearts of individual converts, and the elevated tone of morals, which their sentiments and example will produce.

After some consultation with the Presbyterian divines, Charles published a royal declaration concerning religion, which, being very liberal, was thankfully received; but the king took care that it should not become a law*. On the terms of this declaration many conformed to the Episcopal establishment, and Dr. Reynolds accepted the bishopric of Norwich. A conference was appointed; but, as the divines nominated on behalf of the establishment were the most rigid men, who were exasperated against the Puritans, the two parties were, by this farce, thrown to a greater distance than before †.

In the convocation, the prayer-book was altered from bad to worse. To accommodate those who objected to the use of the apocrypha in the liturgy, the edifying story of Bell and the Dragon was now added‡. Dr. Sheldon, bishop of London, who is said by Burnet to have regarded religion only as an engine of state, hearing the earl of Manchester say to the king, "The terms are so hard, I am afraid the Presbyterians will not conform," replied, "I am afraid they will: but now we know their minds we will make them all knaves if they do." This was, indeed, the study of the bishops, to make the terms of conformity as hard as possible; for they wished to wrest from the Presbyterians many

* Warner, vol. ii., p. 598—600.

† Pierce, p. 224.

‡ Burnet's Own Times, p. 182. The Conformists' Plea for the Non-conformists. Warner.

of the good livings which they then held. The king, his mistresses, and the secret cabal of papists at court, were bent on throwing such a number out of the establishment, that a toleration might become necessary, under the shelter of which they might screen the papists. The non-conformists were persecuted, to force them to yield to this project, which they dreaded and abhorred.

On St. Bartholomew's day, August 24th, 1662, the act of uniformity expelled from the establishment all ministers who would not solemnly declare their unfeigned assent and consent to everything in the Book of Common Prayer. In many parts of the kingdom, the ministers could not procure the book in time; so that, in their farewell sermons, they told their flocks that they were obliged to leave them, for not declaring their assent to a book which they had not been able to see. But this was no obstacle to the ruling party, who wished for the most costly sacrifices at the shrine of absolute obedience, and longed to rid themselves of men who were troubled with a conscience. Two thousand ministers resigned their livings in the establishment, and exposed themselves to the loss of all things, rather than submit to these new terms of conformity*. Bartholomew's day was chosen, because they would thus be deprived of a year's income, which would be due shortly after. No portion of their former livings was reserved to keep them from starving, for the persecutors were not ashamed to be outdone by their enemies†. Mr. Locke styles these two thousand ejected

* Calamy's Non-conformists' Memorial, *passim*. Pierce, p. 232.

† Burnet, vol. ii., p. 184. Warner.

ministers, learned, pious, orthodox divines; and we have no hesitation in saying, that of them the world was not worthy, nor have their equals been seen in any age or nation. Their writings, which have erected to their memory a monument more durable than brass or marble, have so perpetuated and diffused their sentiments and spirit, that had their enemies anticipated the consequences of excluding them from the pulpits, they would have left them to preach that they might have had no leisure to write. Never has the world seen such a sacrifice to principle. A person, who was no dissenter, observed at that time, "I am glad so many have chosen suffering, rather than conformity to the establishment; for had they complied, the world would have thought there had been nothing in religion; but now they have given a striking proof that there are some sincere in their professions." A conformist thus liberally pleads their cause* :—"They have suffered the loss of all things: is it for mere humour, not conscience or religion? Have they so little wit as not to know what is best, good livings or nasty prisons? Do they hate their wives and children? They declare, they cannot conform: Who should know best, they or we?"

From this time, the name of Puritan was exchanged for that of Non-conformist, including Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Quakers. They petitioned the king for an indulgence, which, for the sake of covering the Roman Catholics, he seemed disposed to grant; but as the parliament was unwilling, they gave him money, and he left the sufferers to their fate. Some of

* Conformists' Plea.

the ejected ministers, to show their catholicism, practised what was called occasional conformity, by going to the established places, and joining in the worship, though they could not comply with the terms required of ministers *.

To add iniquity to iniquity, the conventicle act was passed, decreeing, that if any person, above the age of sixteen years, be present at any meeting for worship, different from the Church of England, where there shall be five persons more than the household, they shall, for the first offence, suffer three months imprisonment, or pay five pounds; for the second, the punishment shall be doubled; and for the third, they shall be banished to America, or pay a hundred pounds, and if they return from banishment, suffer death†. The oath of an informer was sufficient to inflict all the severity of this statute of Draco. While many of the best of men filled our jails, the vilest of the human race rioted in debauchery, by informing, for the sake of the reward.

A most dreadful plague now visited our country; and while some of the conforming ministers faithfully stood by their flocks, the greater part of them fled as hirelings; so that the non-conformists seized this opportunity of preaching to the multitudes who, while on the brink of the grave, were left as sheep without a shepherd. But no revenge could satisfy, no judgments alarm the high party; for they now introduced an act

* Dr. Calamy being present at his late parish of Aldermanbury, London, was invited to preach, as the person expected did not come. For complying, he was thrown into Newgate; but there was such a resort of persons of distinction to visit him, that it was thought prudent, after a few days, to restore him to liberty.

† Burnet, p. 204.

to restrain non-conformists from inhabiting corporate towns. An oath of passive obedience and non-resistance * was enacted ; and all who refused it, were prohibited from coming within five miles of any town where they formerly preached ; or from keeping schools, or taking boarders, under a penalty of forty pounds. Thus, though they were not actually burned alive, they were intentionally starved to death. But while earth and hell were against them, heaven appeared in their behalf. During twenty-eight years of sufferings, their enemies were never gratified by any resistance ; nor was any of them in prison for debt. Scarcely Elijah himself was fed more immediately from heaven †.

The king, at length, began to complain aloud of the bishops and conforming clergy ‡, who increased the numbers of dissenters, by such conduct as the people could not help contrasting with that of the ejected ministers. Hence a scheme for toleration was now talked of ; but though it was cherished by the moderate divines of the establishment, it roused such opposition, that the non-conformists were left to all the fury of renewed persecution. A paper war fanned the flames of hatred and bigotry. Ralph Willis, called the cobbler of Gloucester, published an account of the scan-

* Warner, vol. ii., p. 604. Warner, p. 612.

† The righteous governor of the world sent fire as well as plague, so that eighty-nine parish churches in London, together with St. Paul's cathedral, were burned down. Some temporary places were erected with boards, where, as well as in their own abodes, the non-conformists preached. They were called tabernacles ; a name which has been since familiar among those who worship apart from the establishment. Drs. Owen and Goodwin, with other independent ministers, adopted this practice, so that many of the citizens of London flocked to the places where the liturgy was not used.

‡ Pierce, p. 240. Warner, vol. ii., pp. 611, 615.

dalous lives of many of the conforming clergy. Samuel Parker, afterwards bishop of Oxford, was the champion for the hierarchy; but he was answered by Andrew Marvel, the Pasquin of his age, whose lively wit effected more than all the learning of Dr. Owen's grave replies; for Marvel's pages afforded merriment to all ranks and parties, from the king and his mistresses, down to the lowest of the populace.

The act against conventicles was renewed with additional severity*; denying to the sufferers the protection of trial by jury, and exposing them to conviction, on the oath of a single informer, who was rewarded by a third of the exorbitant fine. Volumes could not contain a complete history of the sufferings of these men, whose souls, from beneath the altar of God, cry, "How long, Lord, holy, just, and true?" At length, to accomplish the design of favouring the papists, and establish the king's prerogative to dispense with the laws, a declaration of indulgence was published by his majesty, suspending all the penal laws against dissenters, and allowing them to meet in places of worship licensed by the king †.

* To the honour of bishop Williams it should be recorded, that he argued against this infamous act, though the king had requested him not to speak against it, or to stay away from the house while it was debated. He told his majesty that, as an Englishman and a senator, he was bound to speak his mind. Warner, p. 615.

† At this time was passed the Test Act, of which we shall speak entirely in the words of Dr. Warner: "Whatever the dissenters might at first think of the indulgence, they saw now that they were only to be tools to advance the Romish religion; therefore, Alderman Love, a city member and a leading Presbyterian, spoke against it with great zeal, and said that they would rather go without their desired liberty, than have it in a way so detrimental to the nation. The House of Commons, which had, for ten years, been loading them with penal laws, were so wrought upon by this sacrifice of their liberty to the interest of the nation and religion,

At length, Charles, under whom they had suffered twenty years of bitter persecution, died by poison, according to bishop Burnet. To this prelate we are indebted for an account of his character and death. There is strong evidence that he became a Papist, before he was the champion of the church of England, and the enemy of Dissenters; but to us it appears a nugatory question to ask, what was the religion of a graceless debauchee; for he used to come from the bed of his harlots to church and to sacrament. He was not of a cruel disposition; but as he was ever ready to

that they ordered a bill to be brought in, to take off the penalties of the act of uniformity, and require only the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. It passed in the Commons, but being detained for amendments in the Lords, the parliament was prorogued before it was ready for the royal assent. But the king having, at the remonstrance of the Commons, revoked the indulgence, and promised to pass any bill they should present to him for the security of religion, they took him at his word, and passed a bill to prevent dangers which may happen from popish recusants; requiring all persons, in any office under government, to take the sacrament in the church of England. When this bill, which has since been called the Test Act, was brought into the house, the court endeavoured to prevent it, by dividing the Protestant church party, with a proposal for some regard to the Protestant dissenters. But Alderman Love, seeing the project, stood up again, and said, 'He hoped the clause proposed in favour of dissenters would occasion no intemperate heat; that he should move for passing the bill, which was such a barrier against popery, without any alteration, without interposing anything till it was finished; the dissenters choosing rather to lie under the severity of the laws for a time, than clog a more necessary work.' This defeated the scheme of the court; and as no money-bill could be obtained without, the king gave his assent. Though the Protestant religion stood in need of the united strength of all its professors against popery, and of all the civil securities which could be given for the church and state, yet I presume to say, that it is not only a great prostitution of the sacrament, to make it a qualification for civil offices and employments, but an infatuation to suppose it can be any security for our religion. The zeal, however, of this house of commons against popery, inclined both Churchmen and Dissenters to pass the act; and it has ever since continued, much to the dishonour, I think, of our holy religion." Warner, vol. ii., pp. 619, 620.

sacrifice the non-conformists for money, they suffered as much from him as if he had been a Nero. He died, if we may believe James, his successor on the throne, in the communion of the church of Rome. Truly that must be a *holy* mother-church which could esteem itself honoured by such a son as Charles II.

His last moments present an awful scene. Sitting up in the bed, with one of his mistresses, who treated him as her husband, he recommended his other harlots to the care of his successor, but said not one word of his wife, or his people, or his debts, though he had saved ninety thousand guineas, which should have paid them. The bishops of the church of England were excluded, and a popish priest called in, who gave him the consecrated wafer, which, from the languor of his frame, he could not swallow, without a glass of water to wash it down. Thus he passed to a tribunal before which our imagination shudders to behold him *.

The duke of York, who now ascended the throne by the title of James II., began his reign with an honest avowal of popery †. The Dissenters were persecuted with tenfold fury; for, availing himself of Monmouth's rebellion to crush the enemies of popery ‡, and arbitrary power, the king turned his realm into a slaughter-house, of which judge Jeffreys was the grand butcher §. After his western circuit, the quarters of several hundred persons were hung up all over the country, for fifty or sixty miles. This fiery persecution produced an effect supremely honourable to the sufferers; for several ministers of the establishment forsook it, as unworthy the name

* Burnet's Own Times, vol. ii. p. 606—9.

† Warner, p. 630.

‡ Ibid., p. 631.

§ Pierce, pp. 263, 4.

of a church of Christ, since it was stained with the blood of the saints.

But the king advanced so rapidly in the road to Rome, that the clergy took the alarm. James, irritated at this, turned round and courted the Dissenters, pretending that he had always wished to favour them, but the clergy had opposed, and offered, rather to yield to the Papists, provided they might be allowed to crush the Dissenters. The penal laws were now suspended, and the meetings of the Non-conformists were publicly held*. The party which had betrayed the liberties of the country, for the vile price of their enemies' blood, now became wonderfully patriotic. Both the church and the king courted the Dissenters. Thus terminated the prosecutions for non-conformity; for although the penal statutes still existed †, they lay dormant, till by the act of toleration they were annulled. The Dissenters wisely improved their liberties, without inquiring what was the design of the robber, in restoring to them their own; justly concluding, that if they could preach the Gospel, and render men Christians, this was the most effectual way to prevent their becoming Papists. But when James tempted them to active concurrence with his measures for introducing popery and arbitrary power, he found them so determined against sacrificing their country's liberties, that he said, "They were an ill-natured set, who could not be gained."

As the king, having published his royal declaration for liberty of conscience, commanded it to be read in all the churches, the clergy were greatly embarrassed.

* Warner, p. 633.

† Ibid., vol. ii. p. 264.

Several of the bishops, who ventured to address his majesty against this declaration, were sent to the Tower*, where they were visited by the Dissenters, whom they had hunted into prisons. After a long trial in Westminster-hall, the prelates were acquitted, and seemed so much improved by their sufferings, that even Sancroft became an advocate for kindness to those whom he now deigned to call his Protestant dissenting brethren.

But James, pursuing his infatuated councils, provoked the nation to invite over William, prince of Orange, to rescue the church and the liberties of England. The church party expressed their approbation of the Dutch invasion in such terms, that James was surprised and confounded, after all their declarations that passive obedience and non-resistance was the doctrine of the church of England, and that resistance to kings on any pretence was damnable †. But this was good and wholesome doctrine, only while the application was confined to their enemies ‡; for as soon as James gave the episcopal party to feel the weight of it upon their own persons, they rose and drove from the throne the unhappy monarch §, who had learned from them to believe himself the inviolate king of a nation of slaves, and whose eyes were opened time enough to see himself ruined. Compton, bishop of London, like a true son of the church militant, girded on the armour, and with a red coat and sword, assisting Anne to desert her father and king, fled with her to meet the invading prince. Burnet, who was afterwards bishop of Sarum,

* Warner, vol. ii. p. 264.

† Ibid., p. 630.

‡ Burnet's Own Times, vol. ii. p. 699.

§ Warner, p. 647.

had carried on the negotiation in Holland, and having come over with William, was a chaplain in his army.

Yet who will charge the established clergy with more hypocrisy, than will ever be found under the profession of such political principles * ? As a doctrine of religion, abstinence from all political interference, and non-resistance of injuries, may be sincerely maintained. But by whom ? The gay student in the elegant retreat of academic groves ? Or the pampered dignitary, " clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day ? " Certainly not. But by those who, for eternity, sacrifice the friendship of the world, who, every day submitting to mortifications which they might easily avoid, lead a life of voluntary martyrdom.

Of the sufferings of the non-conformists, though *we* can make but an imperfect statement, the exact record is on high. Mr. Jeremy White is said to have collected a list of sixty thousand persons, who had suffered for dissent, between the restoration and the revolution, of whom five thousand died in prison. Lord Dorset was assured by Mr. White, that king James had offered a thousand guineas for the manuscript, but that in tenderness to the reputation of the church of England, he had determined to conceal the black record. In the preface to the plea for the non-conformists by Mr. Delaune, that gentleman is said to have been one of nearly eight thousand, who had, for dissenting from the church of England, perished in prison. It is added, that within three years, property was wrung from them to the amount of two millions sterling. But who could

* Warner, p. 643.

calculate the total loss of lives, and of substance from the rise of the Puritans to the triumph of toleration under king William? The multitudes who fled from these oppressions peopled a considerable part of the new world; while the English refugees, who formed churches in all the principal towns of Holland, added to the strength and industry of that rising state. But, from these accumulated injuries, the Dissenters rose, at the revolution, little diminished in strength or numbers, and capable of turning either scale, into which they might choose to throw their weight*.

SECT. II.—*Reasons of Dissent.*

THE fundamental principle on which Dissenters build their system, is, “That Jesus Christ is the sole head of the church.” Legislative authority in religion belongs to him alone. This authority he has exercised by framing a perfect constitution. Whatever he has revealed, we are called to receive. Whatever he commands, we are bound to obey. Whatever he forbids, it is our duty to avoid. Whatever he has left indifferent, that, no man, or body of men, has a right to enjoin or to forbid; for who should make either a duty or a sin of what Christ has made neither the one nor the other? If men make additions to Christ’s constitution, fidelity to him constrains us to reject the criminal encroachment on the sovereign authority of the Head of the church. Or if they take away, or leave out a part

* Neal, vol. v. p. 21.

of Christ's constitution, we must reject their system; because they impeach the wisdom of the divine Legislator, as if, in his constitution, there were something superfluous: they assume an authority in his kingdom to which they have not the shadow of a claim.

To these sentiments, and a corresponding conduct, we feel ourselves bound by the injunctions,—“Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.” Christians have a right to all the doctrines and institutions of the Gospel, just as they were communicated to the world by Jesus Christ; and, in order to the enjoyment of them, none should render necessary anything more than Christ has made necessary. As the church is the kingdom of the Redeemer, in which he is the sole Legislator, and all the clergy, and indeed all men who profess to be his disciples, are but his servants, entrusted with not an atom of legislative authority, it is high treason to make the laws of Christ of no effect, and exclude from the benefit of his institutions those whom he commands us to receive. Can it be imagined, that He, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” would give authority, either to civil or ecclesiastical governors, to undo what he has done, or to contradict what his wisdom has enjoined?

A second principle, which is a main pillar of the dissenting system, is, “that the sacred Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice.” The words of

Chillingworth, which have been always quoted with approbation, "The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants," are applicable to Dissenters. The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestant dissenters. All their religion is contained in this book. Whatever they find in it, they receive with reverence, as a revelation from God, without an objection to a single idea. On the other hand, they receive nothing as religion which is not contained in this book, by whomsoever it may be maintained, and however great the names which it may boast of as its advocates. The following is the language of a dissenter. "If Eusebius were to bring me the creed agreed on in the council of Nice, and say, 'Subscribe your name to the truth,' I would answer, This is your creed, but you are fallible men; I will examine it, and see if it accords with the word of God. 'But we are the fathers of the church, to whom the profoundest reverence should be given.' For historical facts I give you that credit which your character seems to demand, but not for doctrines: fathers are not always wiser than their children. The piety of many of you I revere: your furious, passionate behaviour towards each other, I detest: your skill in interpreting Scripture I never admired. But I will examine your creed by the word of God: only be assured, that the authority of your synod weighs nothing with me.

"If Cardinal Bellarmine should put into my hands the decrees of the council of Trent, and say, 'Receive these, and believe them; for they have the seal of infallibility upon them; they were framed by a general council, and confirmed by his holiness the pope.' My

answer is, I will examine them, to see if they agree with the word of God. ‘Examine them! I say receive them, and believe them. If you refuse, you will incur the anathema both of the pope and the general council, whose authority you have the arrogance to question.’ You may anathematise, if you please: I am not afraid of *brutum fulmen*: ‘the curse causeless shall not come.’ Could I find your infallibility sanctioned by the word of God, I would respect it. But I cannot; and I must try everything by the sacred Scriptures. Adieu, Cardinal Bellarmine.

“Should Archbishop Parker deign to reach me the articles of the church of England, and have the courtesy to add, ‘These were drawn up by the most eminent Reformers, some of whom gave their lives for the truth. It is the queen’s (Elizabeth) command, that you, as well as every other subject of her realm, should receive them, on pain of her displeasure.’ May it please your grace, I highly respect the Reformers: I revere their virtues, and would throw the veil of charity over their faults; but I must examine their doctrine, whether it be according to the Scriptures of truth. I must, according to divine command, try the spirits whether they be of God. ‘It is the queen’s injunction, that you should declare your unfeigned assent and consent to the whole.’ With all due reverence for her majesty, as my civil ruler, I must be plain to say, that as I do not believe the infallibility of popes and councils in matters of religion, neither do I believe the infallibility of queens and convocations: I must examine for myself. Whatever in the articles is agreeable to the book of God, in receiving it, I receive them; and

whatever is contrary, I must reject. 'Consider what you do: the consequences are serious. You know I have ejected a great number of ministers from their livings, because they refused subscription, and would not yield a full conformity; many of them are entirely ruined; and some are in prison. It was the queen's wish.' I know you have: I am no stranger to your character and proceedings; but whatever may be the consequences, I must 'obey God, rather than man.'

"If the prelate should be followed by a Presbyter, who should thus address me, 'I am Mr. Herle, prolocutor of the assembly of divines, which met at Westminster. This is our confession of faith, confirmed by proofs from the word of God; you are requested to subscribe it.' The most I can say, sir, is, that I will examine if it accords with the sacred oracles. 'Why will you not put your name to it? It has been approved by the ablest divines, and subscribed by all the ministers and elders of the church of Scotland, which is said to excel every other church in purity. Pray do.' I assure you, sir, I have a very high esteem for many of the members of the assembly. With the exception of the synod of Dort, I do not know that there was ever a council of Christian ministers who, for talents, piety, and zeal, could be compared to them. But they were fallible men, and I must try their sentiments by the sacred Scriptures. But stop, I have just cast my eye on the twenty-third chapter, where it is asserted, that 'the civil magistrate has authority, and it is his duty to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all

corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented, or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting thereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.' The only proof from the New Testament of this prodigious authority, is Matth. ii., 4, 5.—' And when Herod had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born; and they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written in the prophets.' So you call this proving a doctrine from Scripture, Mr. Herle? Take back your confession of faith, I will not put my hand to it.

" Should I, after this, have the honour of a visit from Dr. Owen and Mr. Howe, and they should bring with them the system of the congregational brethren agreed on at the Savoy, and say, ' This is the substance of divine truth, which we have drawn from the Word of God, after much prayer and patient attention to the subject.' I would reply, Gentlemen, I am greatly honoured by your visit. From my heart I can truly affirm, that there are not two men in England, or the world, whom I more highly esteem, to whom I am under greater obligations for the benefit I have reaped from their writings, or to whose judgment I would pay greater deference. But I can receive nothing on your authority, I must examine your confession of faith by the oracles of truth. ' You mistake our meaning (they reply); we are not come to desire you to subscribe it as your creed. It was not designed to be imposed on any one,

but to be laid before the world as an exposition of the sentiments which we hold. Examine it by all means : embrace what appears agreeable to the Divine Will, and if anything be contrary to the form of sound words, reject it.' Gentlemen, farewell.

" Let none imagine from what I have said on this subject, that I treat human authority with contempt : far from it. If a wise and good man assert anything to be a divine truth, I hear with attention, and give it the weight which is due to so respectable a character. If twenty good men assert the thing, I listen to it with still greater respect. If two hundred of equal wisdom and goodness unite in the assertion, I consider myself bound to weigh it with still greater deference. If it be a subject in which their worldly interest is not concerned, nor the prejudices of education interwoven, the person who would treat such authority with contempt, merits the severest reprehension. But still I consider them as fallible men ; and it is my duty to compare their sentiments with the Old and New Testament, and to receive them, just as far as they agree with the writings of Peter, and Paul, and John, and the other apostles of Jesus Christ, ' The holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' "

Another important principle, which belongs to the system of the Dissenters, is, " the right of private judgment in all matters of religion." Personal conviction lies at the foundation of all rational devotion, and Christian practice. If a system of opinions be presented as of Divine Authority, we should know the

evidence on which it rests. If it be satisfactory, we feel our obligations to act under its influence. But if it do not carry conviction to our minds, to whomsoever it may be a rule, it cannot be a rule to us. Should any find fault with this reasoning, we say, if I am not to judge for myself, who is to judge for me? "The priest," will it be said? If a thing appears to me to be false, am I to receive it because he says it is true? But what priest? "Your parish priest, to be sure, who is your lawful teacher." If he has such a right, as being my parish priest, then the curé of St. Sulpice in Paris has the same right, as parish priest over his numerous parishioners. Then the parish priest at Toledo, the imán of a mosque at Constantinople, a Bramin at Benares. For where is the weak link in this chain? If I am to submit to the parish priest, because he is my legal pastor and teacher, appointed by authority to guide me in matters of faith, there is precisely the same reason for the submission of the parishioners of St. Sulpice, of Toledo, of Constantinople, and of Benares.

It will be said, perhaps, "The supreme magistrate and the legislature are to judge for you: it is their prerogative." This shocks me more than the other. The studies and pursuits of the rulers of the nations have seldom been peculiarly directed to theology, and a critical investigation of the doctrines of religion; and on this account, they are certainly not likely to be very competent judges in spiritual casuistry. If a man's conscience is not to be in the priest's keeping, it appears still more unsuitable that it should be in the king's keeping. If it be asserted, that it is one of the prerogatives of his office, then it must belong to every ruler in every land.

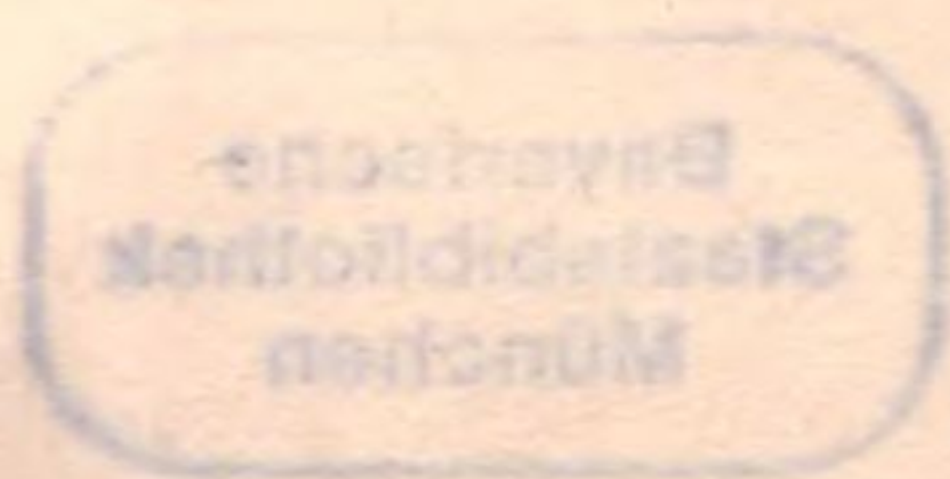
The kings of France have a right to guide the consciences of all the inhabitants of France. The same authority appertains to the king of Spain and his courtiers; to the grand seignior, and his divan; and to the emperor of China, and his mandarines of state. The reader must not be alarmed nor indignant at the comparison; for however much these men may differ from each other, they agree in this, that every one of these rulers conceives his religion to be true, and every one has equal authority to enforce or propagate his religion. On this statement of the subject, it is presumed, that few will be found to maintain the argument.

But there is something to be adduced, which is still more decisive against the claim, namely, the authority of sacred scripture. Nero reigned at Rome, when Paul preached the Gospel, and was a prisoner there. But did he give up his religious opinions to Nero's judgment, or the judgment of the senate? No; the apostle persevered in direct opposition to both, and suffered death for disobedience to the emperor's edicts, and because he would not acknowledge his authority in matters of religion. Does he give the slightest hint that others should bow to the ruler's faith? No: where he enjoins obedience to magistrates in civil affairs, religion is evidently an excepted thing; and the disciples of Christ are commanded to yield subjection to him alone, and to suffer the loss of goods, of liberty, nay, even of life itself, rather than submit to be of the established religion of the Roman empire. These, it may be said, were not Christian magistrates. But in what part of the sacred code will it be found that

Christian magistrates have this peculiar privilege conferred on them? Should it, for the sake of argument, be allowed that it belongs to Christian magistrates, then it is the prerogative of the king of Spain. But if I dwell in Spain, am I to receive my creed from him? Am I, at his command, to swallow the dregs of popery? No. "It is the magistrate who professes the reformed religion in its purity to whom this authority belongs." But if the magistrate is himself to be judge (and judge in this case he must undoubtedly be), the king of Spain glories in being a member of the holy apostolical Roman Catholic church; and he considers the king of England as a heretic, whose soul is defiled with the most dangerous opinions, and whose condemnation is certain. If they are both to be judges in their respective countries, each thinks his own faith the best, and there is no end to the labyrinth. The only remaining alternative is, that every individual should judge for himself in matters of religion; and as he must give an account of himself unto God at last, so he must use his understanding to choose his religion, and decide for himself in a matter of the highest moment to his eternal felicity. Thus will everything fall into its natural channel. The business of the priest, or minister, is to teach the principles of religion, that the people may understand them, and be enabled to judge aright; and the office of the magistrate is to protect them in the enjoyment and exercise of religious liberty, while they demean themselves as peaceable members of the community. Another principle connected with the former is, "that every man has a right to make a public profes-

sion of that religion which his private judgment dictates to be from God." To maintain that I may hold what sentiments on religion I please, but that I must not profess them openly, is trifling with sacred things. Religion involves in its very nature the exercise of public worship. Its most delightful ordinances are to be dispensed in society, and some of its sweetest pleasures are enjoyed in the communion of the church. If I be deprived of these, it is but mockery to say, that I have the right of private judgment. I plead likewise for liberty of a public profession; and I think that every argument, which proves it to be the right of each individual to judge for himself in matters of religion, establishes his right to profess it in open day.

When Christ sent out his apostles to propagate his religion, their commission ran in these words, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,"—Mark xvi. 25. In this commission, it is plainly implied, as will be evident to all, that the apostles had a right to go into every country, and to preach in every kingdom; and that if the ruler of any country impeded them in their Master's work, and refused to allow them to assemble the people to hear the Gospel, he was, by such act, setting himself up in direct opposition to Jesus Christ. If, then, any one of the sovereigns of the nations had said to an apostle "You may enjoy your own opinions without molestation, but you shall not preach them to the people in my dominions;" would he not have been guilty of a most heinous crime, for which he must give an account, at the last day, to Him who is "the prince of the kings of the



earth?" If it was a crime in them to hinder the apostles from preaching, it was a crime also to hinder the people from hearing them. And if, when the apostles went away, they left an evangelist, a Timothy, or an ordinary minister, an Archippus, to carry on the glorious work, it was a crime in the eyes of Christ to prevent either him, or the people from assembling together for the worship of God, and for observing the ordinances of Jesus Christ. But if I preach the doctrine of the apostles, or hear that doctrine preached by another, is it not equally criminal in any ruler to attempt to prevent me from doing so?

"But will not the safety of the state be endangered by the exercise of this unbounded liberty? What but disorder and civil commotion can be expected, as the natural consequence of extensive indulgence? Religious animosities will soon set the country in a flame." Though this objection is commonly urged, it certainly does not come from the lips of a man who is intimately acquainted with the annals of the nations, and at the same time possesses a candid and liberal mind. He must be either grossly ignorant, or deeply prejudiced. The severest evils which any country has suffered on an ecclesiastical account, have arisen from disturbances created by the clergy of the established religion, when they were displeased with the conduct of the civil rulers*. The greatest injuries next to these, have had their origin in the discontents of untolerated sects, groaning under the envenomed scourge of persecution and oppression. Where full liberty of worship was

* See Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, passim.

given, no injury has been sustained; but a refusal to grant even toleration has brought the heaviest calamities on the nations.

England has endured convulsions arising from dissensions about religion. But was it when granting a free toleration to all? or when refusing it to every one who would not subscribe to the established creed? The intolerance of Charles I. was one cause of the miseries both of England and Scotland. At present, while, under the benign government of the house of Hanover, there is universal toleration, can any country enjoy greater internal peace? However much we may differ on theological points, all agree in this. Were we all of one communion, our harmony could not be more complete. America presents us with a similar example of this pleasing kind. There are no restraints on religious liberty, but every man may publicly profess his faith, without suffering the slightest civil disability on that account. The government finds no trouble from theological strifes.

But ought not the magistrate to be acquainted with the opinions of a person or sect, before liberty of worship be granted? This precaution has been often suggested, and much alarm has been roused concerning the danger of tolerating religious opinions. But governments appear to have been guided by their prejudices, and to have felt a causeless dread of every system which was different from their own. For nearly two centuries, England refused to tolerate Roman Catholics, because their tenets were hostile to England's peace. In France, the government pretended that the Protestant

religion was dangerous to the state. Scotland was, for a season, unwilling to tolerate Episcopalians, as inimical to the established Presbyterian faith. And England, for a considerable time, would not allow liberty of worship to the Presbyterians, because they were said to be enemies both to church and state. With such examples in view, little regard is due to these pretended fears. Were inquiry to be made concerning every preacher's faith in England, a board of various members and subdivisions would be necessary for the purpose. And if there were such a board, they might think that, by allowing one, refusing another, warning a third, and giving sage counsel to a fourth, they did wonders, and prevented a world of evil and danger to the state: and but for their precautions, the country would be undone. But how useless they would be, to say nothing worse, the quiet spirit of the people of these congregations sufficiently declares.

All the affairs of the church are to be managed by spiritual men. None but Christians are qualified, and those only I call Christians, who "deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ." Should I hear that a Yorkshire ploughman, who understands no language but his county brogue, was appointed professor of Arabic in the university of Cambridge, or that a blind man was chosen by the manufacturers of Leeds to judge of the colour of their cloths, it would appear to me unspeakably less absurd, than for mere worldly men, destitute of the knowledge or of the spirit of the Gospel, to bear any office in the church of Christ, or possess any authority in the management of its concerns. Whatever their outward stations and conditions in civil

society may be, they are unfit to have any influence, or exercise any power over its ministers and members, or to interfere in the regulation of its affairs.

More particular Reasons of Dissent.

As Dissenters acknowledge no head of the church but Jesus Christ, they cannot accord with the church of England, which owns the king for her head. The church of England, in nearly her present state, was brought into existence by the creative energy of the legislative authorities of England. The knights and burgesses in the commons house of parliament; the temporal peers, dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, and barons in the house of lords; and Queen Elizabeth, the sovereign of the land, brought the church of England into being, like Adam, full grown, with all her soul and body; but she had also her garments, her gifts, and her ornaments. Mere laymen, and a laywoman, were the authors of her existence. As for the spiritual peers, they refused to concur, and absented themselves, on the occasion, having an earnest desire for the establishment of popery*.

* A small book, entitled "The Touchstone of the new Religion, &c., or sixty Assertions of Protestants tried by their own rule of Scripture alone, and condemned by clear and express texts of their own Bible: to which is added, a Roman Catholic's Reasons why he cannot conform to the Protestant religion. London, printed in the year 1735," and purchased in Ireland in the year 1807, where it is no doubt extensively circulated among the Roman Catholics, assigns this as an eighth reason why they cannot conform to the Protestant religion: "because Protestantism was settled upon its present bottom in this kingdom by act of parliament, in the first year of Queen Elizabeth, in opposition to all the

As the civil government is the creator, so is it likewise the preserver of the church of England. If any alteration takes place, it is not by the power of the clergy, but of the parliament and the king. If a single occasional and temporary collect be wanted, on a fast or thanksgiving-day, for the use of the parish priests, the college of archbishops and bishops have not a right to make it, without an order from the king. The impotence of both houses of convocation, when formerly allowed to meet, and to act, was such that they could not even censure, with effect, the erroneous opinions of a member of their own body. A woman, who then sat on the throne, was of a different opinion from all the clergy of the land, and her opinion prevailed. They thought Whiston a heretic: good Queen Anne, of blessed memory, was of a different judgment; and Whiston remained unrebuked*.

The alteration of anything which may be considered as a standing rule, requires still more of the civil authority: there must be the concurrence of the lords and commons, as well as the approbation of the king or queen. Various changes have been made, of late, in the frame of the church, respecting the residence of the clergy, the power of the bishops, and the appointment of curates. But by whom have they been made? By the clergy in convocation? No such thing: but by his

bishops, to the whole convocation of the clergy, and to both the universities; that is, in one word, in opposition to the whole body of the clergy of the kingdom; as may be seen in Dr. Fuller, book vi. &c., and Heylin, p. 285, 6. How then can it be called the church of England, or any other church at all, seeing it was introduced and established only by the authority of mere laymen, in opposition to the church?" p. 49.

* Burnet's History of his Own Times, vol. ii. p. 571—3.

majesty, and the lords and commons, in parliament assembled. By them all is done. They are the sole reformers; and without their permission and authority the clergy cannot wear a garment of a different shape, or colour, in their ministrations. So entirely is the civil authority the head of the church, that her thousands of clergy, dignified and subordinate, cannot alter a single question in the catechism, nor wear a blue surplice instead of a white one, were they so inclined. Here then is a parliamentary church, as to its origin, a church wholly made by laymen, and alterable by laymen according to their sovereign's pleasure. It has been attempted to represent the church as the ally of the state; but the state is the head; the church one of the inferior members. The church of England is the creature of the state, as much as the army, the navy, the courts of justice, or the boards of customs and excise.

To such a church I do not choose to belong: I will have no head nor lord, in spiritual matters, but Jesus Christ. I will cheerfully entrust king, lords, and commons with all my civil concerns, but not with my soul. Here I beg leave to judge for myself. In saying so, I am guilty of no offence against the government of my country. When all the inhabitants of England were enjoined by parliament to live in the communion of the established church, it was a parliamentary duty; but when the legislature says to me, "If you do not like the church, you may go to the meeting," I am hereby absolved from parliamentary sin, and in their eyes stand *rectus in curia*, perfectly innocent of the crime of treating them with the slightest disrespect.

I object to the claim advanced in the twentieth article, "That the church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority, in matters of faith." The constitution which Christ has formed, is either complete, or it is not. If it is complete, there is no need of any addition : if it is not complete, speak out and say so. Has the church of England a right to make anything, which is, in its own nature, indifferent, and which Christ has left indifferent, to be not indifferent, but binding on the conscience of her members, and the privilege of communion at her altars, to depend on their compliance with that rite ? I beg she would have the goodness to produce her commission for the exercise of such authority. If there be things which, though of themselves of little importance, yet, from having been abused to purposes of false doctrine and superstition, appear to many wise and good men calculated to mislead and to ensnare ; it will be inconceivably difficult for any church to prove, that it has a right to enjoin these ceremonies on its ministers and congregations. From the exercise of such a power by the church of England, during the fourscore years succeeding the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne, hundreds of the most excellent ministers were ejected from her communion, and prevented from the exercise of their ministry, and buried in private life, or driven into foreign lands. Such were the bitter fruits of the church's power to decree rites and ceremonies *.

* A great part of the bishop's office, during these three reigns, appears to have been to hunt out of the church those ministers who could not conform to every ceremony. Scores of worthy men were suspended in many dioceses on this account ; and at a time when the country was overrun with ignorance, hundreds of zealous preachers were forbidden to

If the church of England possesses this authority, so does every other church. Her parliamentary origin can give her no peculiar claim to the privilege: it must be in virtue of her being a church. But if this be the ground, can she deny the claims of the church of Rome, which boasts of a more ancient and spiritual descent? If the church of England has a right to enjoin the wearing of surplices and gowns, as she formerly did also hoods, tippetts, and many other things as necessary; so has the church of Rome to appoint all the fantastic wardrobe of her cathedrals. If the church of England can consecrate earth, and stones, and bricks, and timber; the church of Rome has as much power to make holy water, holy oil, holy knives. If the church of England has a right to decree that the sign of the cross shall be used in the baptism of every child; has not the church of Rome as good a right to order that the priest shall put his fingers into its ears, as a sign that it shall listen to the word of truth; and salt upon its tongue, as a sign that its conversation shall be always with grace; and to administer milk and honey, in token that it shall love the sincere milk of the word, and keep God's commandments, which shall be sweeter to it than honey from the honeycomb? "But we are told that the church of England decrees nothing which is forbidden in the sacred Scriptures." Well, and who will say that there is any express prohibition of the rites and cere-

— speak to the people in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might be saved. One of them applied to a nobleman for his influence with the bishop in his behalf, and received the following answer: "Had you been guilty of drunkenness, or grosser immoralities, I could have procured you relief; but if you cannot comply with the ceremonies, you are undone. It is a crime in the eyes of the bishop, for which there is no forgiveness."

monies of the church of Rome? Everything should be left indifferent, which Christ has left indifferent; and who would belong to a church which acts so uncharitably as to make those things necessary for our communion, which Christ has not made necessary for communion in his church?

As to the church's "authority in matters of faith," wherein doth it consist, and how far extend? If she has authority to decide what is the true doctrine of Scripture, whom do her decisions bind? The clergy alone, or the laity too? If the priests are certainly bound, are the laity to have no right of private judgment? However things may appear to their minds, are they to believe, only just as the church believes? If they have a right to judge for themselves, all this vaunted authority is nothing.

I ask too, what church has this authority? Can the church of England show any particular grant from Jesus Christ? If she possesses it merely as being a church, then the church of Scotland must possess it too; but her decisions are different from those of her elder sister in the south. The Lutheran church of Sweden must possess it, and her decisions are different from both. The Greek church prefers her claim, and she differs from all the three. The church of Rome too, never backward in pretensions, insists on having the same right, nay, in having the sole right; and pleads in support of her authority what none of the others have ventured to urge, namely, her infallibility. Thus arrayed, she condemns and curses all the rest, as wicked usurpers and impious heretics, whose perdition is sure. In what a labyrinth are we now involved!

Did Christ give authority to any men, or bodies of men, to decree, as to the doctrines of Scripture, in different, nay, in opposite ways? It was an unhappy oversight in those who composed the articles, not first, by means of some spiritual Diomed, to have stolen the palladium of infallibility from the shrine of St. Peter's at Rome.

I must likewise profess that I am dissatisfied with the multiplicity of offices and dignities among the clergy of the church of England. In the New Testament, I read of bishops, or presbyters, and of deacons, as the only standing officers in the church of Christ. Their character is delineated, for the instruction of the faithful, in every age. Persons holding these offices should be found in every Christian society, meeting together for the various acts of worship; for that is the idea of a church in the apostolical writings. We find, therefore, that they actually were, in every church, for some hundred years after the commencement of the Christian era. But in the church of England, I see archbishops, deans, archdeacons, prebendaries, canons, chancellors, in addition to the stated ministers of a parish; and the bishops extending their authority over hundreds of churches. This multitude of names and titles does not savour of the simplicity of the Gospel.

If it was the design of the laymen who planned the English church, as it is said to have been of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, to form an ecclesiastical constitution, the dignities of which should bear an analogy to those of the state, and whose ministers should appear with splendour among the most exalted ranks of civil society, their efforts have certainly been crowned with complete success. But a Dissenter says, "I de-

rive my system of religion entirely from the Word of God, and I do not perceive that the institutions of Christ breathe the wisdom of this world, or accord with its spirit." If these various offices be necessary, it is strange that Christ never hinted anything concerning them. If they be not necessary, it must be an exhibition of unauthorised pomp, and a useless waste of funds. In Christ's spiritual kingdom, there should be nothing for mere show—everything must be for use.

To offices of mere human invention, I cannot, as a friend of the purity and simplicity of the Gospel, assent. If, in the church of Christ, men have a right to make additions in one thing, they have in others; and there will be no end of them, as is evident from the monstrous fabric of the church of Rome. Christian antiquity, for three hundred years after the Redeemer's advent, knew nothing of such offices and such designations. How odd would a list of these various names appear to a converted Pagan! He, having heard an humble missionary, who called himself a minister of Christ, believed the truth as it is in Jesus, and has studied the sacred Scriptures. He has observed the simple constitution of the New Testament church, and he naturally supposes this to be its form in every country in Christendom. But when he meets with this long list of names, to him of sound uncouth, he is filled with astonishment. He can scarcely think that it belongs to the household of faith; and is ready to exclaim, with one spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, to the seven sons of Sceva the Jew, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?"

Another objection which a Dissenter urges, is, “ I do not think a liturgy, or constant stated form of prayer to be so much for the edification of the people, or so agreeable to the nature and spirit of the New Testament, as extemporary prayer. That a form of prayer is lawful and may be expedient and profitable for those persons who are destitute of the gift of prayer, may be granted. But that it is the best and most instructive method, either in public or private worship, and ought to be in general use, is yet to be proved. Allowing a liturgy to be perfect, yet, if it be constantly used, the daily or weekly repetition of the same words has a tendency to produce inattention. Such is the constitution of the mind, that the best human composition, when frequently recurring to the ears, and to the eyes, loses its effect, ceases to interest, and becomes flat and tiresome*. There is need of the seraphic ardour of a saint in heaven, nay, of Gabriel’s fire, to maintain a spirit of lively devotion, in the daily and weekly repetition of the same things.

You may sometimes hear a sermon which charms you by its superior sense, sound theology, exalted piety, and persuasive eloquence ; but if it were proposed to you to hear this, every Lord’s-day, would you not reject the

* It is only in this way to be accounted for, that some very pious and excellent clergymen read the service of the church in so cold and slovenly a manner, and with so little of apparent devotion. When one of this class is heard in the pulpit proclaiming salvation by a crucified Redeemer, the ardour, the earnestness, and the affection which he displays, form such a contrast to his exercise in the desk, that the congregation is ready to think that the soul of some worldly brother stole the use of his body there, or that a new spirit entered into him when he ascended the pulpit.

offer, and say, "No; if it were ten times better than it is, nay, if it were inspiration itself, I should not wish to hear it every day, or every Lord's-day, for I am sure it would lose its effect." The church of England varies, every week, the chapters to be read from the sacred volume, which would bear to be repeated, at least as frequently as the prayers, which she has decreed to be sounded in my ears as often as I enter her courts. I admire the wisdom and goodness of God, in giving to his code of revelation such extent and variety, that, although I read it every day, I vary my devotion, exercise, and study, through the whole year.

If the person who officiates in worship possess an edifying gift in prayer, his extemporary addresses will much more engage the attention, and draw forth the affections of the worshippers. The ideas and words conceived at the moment, he will generally express with much more energy and pathos, and with greater effect upon the congregation, than the clergyman who reads a form which he has read a thousand times before. In all prescribed forms, the person who officiates must bring his heart to the printed prayer, and have the frame of his soul regulated, and called into exercise, by the words of his book. This is by no means calculated to have such influence, either upon the speaker or the hearer, as when the topics of prayer arise out of the feelings of the preacher's soul, and the words and petitions flow from the fulness of his heart. The pre-eminence of extemporary prayer, in accommodating that part of worship to peculiar and extraordinary circumstances, must be acknowledged by every candid reasoner. And of how much benefit this is for direc-

tion and consolation, the children of sorrow and distress especially can tell*.

As to the capacity of performing it with propriety, and to edification, it may confidently be affirmed that the man who has talents for preaching the Gospel with acceptance, has talents also, if they be properly exercised, for extemporary prayer. If a person be found unable to express himself in prayer, in an edifying manner, without book, there is reason to fear that he is destitute of that "aptness to teach," which is mentioned among others as one of the qualifications necessary in a minister of the Gospel. Forms of prayer cannot be discovered in the Christian church, till more than three hundred years after the Saviour's advent. But during all that time, which is said to have been the era of the church's greatest purity, how did her ministers perform the devotional part of public worship? They must all have been able to pray without book, and yet to pray to the edification of the people, and with supplications as efficacious as any which have been offered since.

Is not the Head of the church as able to bestow gifts on his ministers, to lead the devotions of his people

* When any remarkable event, either in the way of mercy or judgment, takes place, respecting the nation, in every congregation where extemporary prayer is used, immediate notice is taken of it, and suitable confessions, supplications, and thanksgiving are offered up, while the hearts, both of the preacher and the hearers, are warm with the subject. But those assemblies which worship by a stated form must wait till the king issues his command for the bishops to meet and frame a collect for the purpose. By that time, the subject has, in a great measure, lost its interest, and the minds of the people are cooled. The form of prayer for each fast-day, when it is cried for sale about the streets by the ballad-merchants, sounds strangely to dissenting ears, telling all the world, beforehand, what they intend to say to God on a certain day to come.

now, as he was then ? In fact, it will be found, that he does bestow them ; and that this part of worship is conducted decently, and in order, and in such a manner as eminently to conduce to the spiritual improvement of the congregation. And many have acquired such a measure of holy eloquence as to rouse the affections of the Christian people to a more elevated strain of devotion, and to produce more powerful effects on the soul than any stated form will be found to do. Even where ministers are defective in the gift of preaching, their talents for prayer are very often such as to excite the wonder of others that they perform this part of their office with so much propriety. As to exceptions, which may justly be brought against persons who are really deficient in ability, their number will be found to bear no proportion to such as read the liturgy in a slovenly and irreverent way ; and that the evil effects produced by the improprieties of dissenting ministers on their congregations, which are usually of the poorer sort, are not to be compared with the injury done by the careless, indifferent, irreverent, and indevout manner in which the service of the church is read by a ten times greater number of the clergy.

I have expressed my disapprobation of all stated forms of prayer ; but if any prefer that mode of worship, it is highly proper that they should enjoy it ; for every man should be left to his own choice, and follow the dictates of his own judgment in matters of religion. But, apart from the general question of the expediency of forms, I have many objections to the liturgy of the church of England. That it was compiled out of various popish rituals, which were then in use in different

parts of the kingdom, is ascertained from unquestionable records*. One disadvantage, of considerable magnitude, arising hence, is, that it does not form a homogeneous and perfect whole. It is cut into an endless number of bits and shreds. The collects and offices, which are so numerous, mar the due order and connexion, and prevent the worshippers from entering particularly into adoration, confession, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving, which ought to characterize a liturgy. Some things are mentioned again and again; other things, of equal importance, not at all. The repetitions are numberless. When the litany is read, the Lord's Prayer is repeated four times in the course of the service in the desk, and once in the pulpit. Surely, this cannot be for edification. In other parts, the same petitions occur several times. In short, it may be safely affirmed, that, though the prayers of dissenters are usually charged with the fault of irksome repetition, there is no place of worship in England in which extemporary prayer is used, though the minister should have the poorest abilities, where there are so many repetitions as in the morning service of the church of England. Extend the remark to all the Protestant places of worship, of every kind, from the Land's End to the Tweed, and it will be found that there are a hundred times more repetitions in prayer, within the established church than without it: and we know who has said, "When ye pray, use no vain repetitions."

The reading of the Apocrypha in the public service, I likewise exceedingly disapprove. That there are many things false in its history, erroneous in its doc-

* Burnet's History of the Reformation.

trine, and ridiculous in its narrations, it would be easy to demonstrate. Who will deny that Tobit and his dog, Tobias and the angel, and Bell and the dragon, are fitter to amuse children in a chimney-corner, in a winter's evening, than to be read in the solemn worship of a church of Christ? The very highest part of it is merely human wisdom: yet from these books, to the exclusion of the canonical Scriptures, the divines who framed the liturgy have prescribed above a hundred lessons in the course of the year. The homilies in one place call the Apocrypha the word of God; but the articles contradict them, and say that it is only the word of man.

Nor am I pleased with the mode of reading the psalms, by dividing the verses alternately between the clergyman and the congregation. What rational apology can be offered for such a practice, it is difficult to divine. The verse which the clergyman reads is easily understood; but the people's is a confused jargon of sounds, not calculated for edification. There may be no statute, nor canon, in its favour; but it is an universal custom; though there certainly can be nothing but custom pleaded in its defence. Perhaps, in the whole history of the Christian church, both in ancient and modern times, the practice of alternate reading is nowhere to be found, but in the church of England*.

The preference of an old translation of the Psalms, not from the original Hebrew, but from the Septuagint, and different from that which is in the English Bible,

* The odd appearance which it makes, and the ludicrous ideas excited in the mind, by this alternate reading, will be seen by looking at Psalm l. 16, &c., and cii. 4, &c., and considering the clergyman as repeating one verse, and the people another.

may be justly censured. The liturgic version of the Psalms is a translation from a translation; and the Greek translation, from which that English one is taken, has so many faults, that it is strange to think, that a learned church as that established in England should be, if she will not receive into her rubric the Psalms from our common Bible, should not go to the fountain, the Hebrew Scriptures, and translate them into English at once. In one place, the old and new translation flatly contradict each other. The old version, in the Psalter, says (Ps. cv. 28), "And they were not obedient to his word." The new one, in our Bibles, makes the sense to be, "And they rebelled not against his word." As the clergy have solemnly professed their unfeigned assent and consent to everything in the Book of Common Prayer, and have likewise declared their assent to the Scriptures, as in the common translation, how do they reconcile these things to each other, and to themselves?

To the length of the morning service I have a serious objection, as I consider it to be injurious to the edification of the people. The preaching of the Gospel should have a sufficient portion of time reserved for it in the public service. Recollect what is said on the subject in the gospels and epistles of the New Testament; and you must be convinced that the preaching of the Gospel was an essential part of the ministry of Christ and his apostles; and if the ignorance of a great part of every congregation be considered, and how much the rest need to have divine truth brought anew to their remembrance, the necessity of preaching will evidently appear. But the tediousness of the morning

service has almost exhausted the strength of the preacher, and the attention of the hearers, before the sermon begins. It may be in consequence of this, that it frequently lasts not above ten, fifteen, or twenty minutes. This is all the instruction from the living teacher which numerous congregations receive. But what science will a man learn by twenty minutes teaching in a week? To the stated inconvenience of so tedious a service, I should not choose to submit. I prefer a public service, where preaching occupies a larger part of the time than it does in thousands of the churches in England.

I object to the creeds which the church of England has adopted into her liturgy, and uses in her worship. The article in the apostles' creed, that "Christ descended into hell," is interpreted by Bishop Pearson according to the letter of the words; but Bishop Burnet conceived it to mean that the soul of the Redeemer was in bliss, during the period between his death and resurrection. If this exposition be allowed, it is the doctrine commonly received in the Protestant churches. The Nicene creed speculates on the Trinity, and gives a human explanation, which multitudes, who receive the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, will not admit. Christ is there called "God of God, light of light, very God of very God." But what idea do these words of man's device convey? That they are consistent with the Son's equality with the Father, will be with many a matter of doubt.

In the Athanasian creed, there is a still more subtle and metaphysical representation of the Trinity; and a

variety of human definitions and distinctions, far beyond the simplicity of the sacred Scriptures. After the manner of the age in which this creed was composed, there are anathemas guarding it in the van, and in the rear, thundering against all who do not believe every iota which it contains : they are excluded from heaven, they are shut up in hell.

There was a schism between the Greek and Latin churches respecting the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son. The Latin church asserted that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. This the Greek church would not allow, but maintained that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, and receives of the Son. Both were in an error, for they apply to the nature, or essence of the Holy Spirit, words which evidently relate to the execution of his office in the economy of redemption. The Athanasian creed takes the Latin side of the question, and in this it is supported by the Nicene, and both condemn the doctrine of the Greek church. But the Athanasian, more fierce than his fellows, casts all members of that communion into the bottomless pit, and shuts them up for ever. When the sacred Spirit in the Scriptures proclaims aloud, “ Go, preach the Gospel ; he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned,” I bow, with reverence and faith, to the Word of God ; but when I hear a man repeat a multitude of the most metaphysical distinctions, and human additions, and add his furious anathema against those who will not receive every word which comes out of his mouth—I am filled with horror.

Besides, it is asserted in the Nicene creed, that the

Son is of the same hypostasis, or substance, with the Father. The Athanasian contradicts the assertion, and, in its bolder strain, affirms that there is one hypostasis of the Father, and another hypostasis of the Son. The difference of translation apparently removes the difficulty; but still it is odd. It has been remarked by some, that when the clergyman, who, in the morning, has been reading the Athanasian creed, so free in its anathemas, in the afternoon repeats the burial-service which sends all to heaven, there is no consistency between the two, nor do they accord with the Word of God.

I object in the strongest manner to the sentiments held by the church of England, and expressed in a succession of offices, which I cannot but consider as contrary to the doctrine and spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The error begins with baptism: then shall the priest say, "We yield thee humble thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church." Can an enlightened and conscientious minister really pronounce these words in faith? Surely it is not from the New Testament that the doctrine of regeneration in baptism, and its universal efficacy for this purpose, has been derived. The reformers must have forgotten to erase this collect from those Popish rituals, from which the English liturgy was compiled. The sentiment is calculated to produce on the minds of the people effects not according with the spiritual

nature of the Gospel, but savouring strongly of the efficacy of the *opus operatum* of the church of Rome. The notion of regeneration by baptism is likewise contained in the catechism. In the answer to the second question, the child is taught to say, "In my baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." The dangerous error is thus instilled into the minds of the rising generation.

Confirmation succeeds baptism. It is an ordinance of human origin, and is destitute of all authority from the Word of God. What resemblance can be found between Peter and John's conveying the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands on the converts in Samaria, and a modern bishop's confirming the young people of his diocese? But, at the worst, "what harm (it may be said) can the blessing of a venerable prelate, accompanied with the laying on of his hands, do to the youth of his flock?" What harm? The injury may be incalculable: it may ruin the soul. When it is expressly said, "that a virtue accompanies the rite," evils of the most serious nature may arise. Attend to the doctrine of the rubric on the subject. In one collect, the bishop says, "Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water, and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins: strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost, the comforter; and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace." In another, there is this petition, "We make our humble supplications unto thee for these thy servants, upon whom (after the example of thy holy

apostles) we have now laid our hands to certify them (by this sign) of thy favour and gracious goodness towards them. Let thy fatherly hand, we beseech thee, ever be over them, let thy Holy Spirit ever be with them."

But what foundation is there for such a superstructure? It is announced, "that none shall be confirmed but such as can say the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments; and can also answer to such other questions as in the short catechism are contained." But does this afford a sufficient ground for such a declaration, and such addresses to God? The knowledge required is exceedingly scanty; and a person may be able to repeat the creed, and Lord's prayer, and commandments, and catechism, who has not a single idea in the mind corresponding with the words. The declaration of their purpose, to endeavour to observe these things, may be the impression of the moment, or a thing of course according to what they have been taught to say. How solemn and how weighty are the bishop's words! and uttered in prayer and thanksgiving to God! Is there not the greatest reason to fear, that it will lead the young to conceive themselves to be the children of God, when they really belong to a very different family? Consequences of eternal duration may result from the act.

The service for the visitation of the sick presents a continuation of the same dangerous doctrine. When a person feels the hand of God lying with weight upon him, and sees death staring him in the face, he will tremble and weep, and say, and do everything that he is bidden, if he be told by a clergyman that it will

conduce to his deliverance from the miseries of a future state, and to the attainment of eternal happiness in heaven. How little dependence is to be placed on such tears, and penitence, and professions, the conduct of the generality of those who recover but too clearly demonstrates. Yet, when this declaration is made by the person in affliction, the clergyman pronounces a most solemn absolution, in the following words, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences: and by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, amen." What effect, think you, gentlemen, is likely to result from this? Is it not more than probable, that the afflicted person will please himself with the assurance of eternal blessedness, when he would be far more properly employed in offering up the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" This is so serious a subject, and the doctrine of the church so exceedingly dangerous, that I tremble at the thoughts of the numberless souls which it may have ruined for ever.

The burial service forms a fourth link of this perilous chain, and binds up all the people of England in the bundle of life. To speak of the state of departed souls, requires the lips of wisdom and caution. There is such a proneness in human nature to delusion, and such a disposition to hope, when there is no just cause of hope, that a wise and good man will be extremely careful not to raise groundless expectations, which tend to injure the living, and convey false ideas of the spiritual world

to their minds. Most of all should this caution be observed in an ordinance of religion. As the hearts of the relatives of the deceased, and of the spectators, are softened by the sight of death, and impressible in an extraordinary degree; and the words of a clergyman arrayed in the priestly vestments, and pronounced with awful solemnity, will at such a season sink into the very centre of the soul, the greatest care should be taken that nothing may be said, concerning the state of a wicked man, which would give any ground to suppose “that it shall be well with him.”

But, so far is this from being the case, in this service of the established church, that in the order for the burial of the dead, while the mourners surround the grave, the clergyman is enjoined solemnly to declare, “Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, of his great mercy, to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother now departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And, in another collect, there is something to the same purpose, but of greater strength:—“Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; we give thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world, beseeching thee that it may please thee shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect.” Still farther to foster the confidence of all

present in the safe and happy state of the deceased, the priest, in the concluding prayer, is taught to speak thus : —“ O merciful God, &c., who hath also taught us by his holy apostle saint Paul, not to be sorry as men without hope, for them that sleep in him, we meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him, as our hope is this our brother doth.” Could words have been devised, which more plainly intimate that the person whose body is committed to the grave possessed the character of a good and faithful servant of Jesus Christ, and is entered into the joy of his Lord? But over whom is this service performed? Were it confined to those select members of the English church, who, according to the judgment of discerning Christians, denied themselves, took up their cross, and followed Christ, it might be considered as the enlightened expression of pious charity. But, alas, there is no such restriction: it must be performed over all, except those who are excommunicated, or unbaptized, or have died by suicide. These are the only exceptions: over all others the service is read, and those lively hopes expressed. It is yearly read over thousands of infidels, and ten thousands of drunkards, swearers, sabbath-breakers, lewd, covetous, and unjust persons, of whom the Spirit of God says, “ They shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” But the officiating priest in the church of England says otherwise: and though he weekly in the pulpit denounces the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; yet when he stands by the side of the

grave, as if death were the expiation of a sinner's crimes, he expresses a full assurance of his admittance into heaven.

Must not the mourners go away consoled with the persuasion of the happy state of their departed friend, and falsely imagine, that, if they live as he did, they are safe? The extent of the mischief produced by such a service is incalculable. Wrong ideas on a subject the most important, is an evil of the first magnitude. Alas! that God should daily hear so many untruths spoken in the most solemn manner, on the most awful occasions, by persons invested with the most sacred offices! How a pious clergyman can from day to day utter such expressions, where there is no ground to entertain the smallest shadow of hope, is so strange, that I am utterly at a loss for words to express my astonishment and grief*.

On the whole, so unscriptural are the ideas of the church of England, in these four ordinances, so erroneous the doctrines she holds, and so pernicious the effects on the multitudes who give implicit credit to everything she says, that were there nothing else to blame, I should think every dissenting minister justified for refusing to officiate at her altars, and every dissenting layman justified in separating from her communion,

* That this reasoning may not be supposed to be the mere effect of prejudice in a Dissenter, let the words of a dignitary of the church be thrown into the balance, and have their weight. Dr. Tillotson having frankly owned in a sermon, that the Dissenters had some plausible objections against the common prayer, archbishop Sancroft sent for him to reprimand him. The doctor stood to what he had asserted. The archbishop asked him what parts of the common prayer he meant. He mentioned the burial-service. Upon which the archbishop owned to him, that he was so little satisfied with that office himself, that for that very reason he had never taken a cure of souls. Calamy, vol. i. p. 226.

and bearing testimony against what is so contrary to the word of God, so dishonourable to the simplicity and purity of the Gospel, and so conducive to the progress of impiety, infidelity, and atheism*. Why are not these things altered, and the reproach of the church rolled away? How is it possible, that what is so wrong could have supported its existence for more than two hundred years, while the sun of Reformation was rising higher all the time †?

The prohibition of parents to present their own children in baptism is a peculiar hardship, as well as an unscriptural practice. In the primitive church, down to Austin's time, it is said, that when the parents were dead, other people entered into their place, and dedicated the children to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but not a hint is given that it extended farther. By the laws of the English church, god-fathers and god-mothers are necessary beings, and must assume the parents' place. If they take any vows upon them,

* Matthew Mead, an eminent nonconformist, was politely addressed by a nobleman,—“I am sorry, sir, that we have not a person of your abilities with us in the established church. They would be extensively useful there.” “You don't, my lord, require persons of great abilities in the establishment.” “Why so, sir; what do you mean?” “When you christen a child, you regenerate it by the Holy Ghost. When you confirm a youth, you assure him of God's favour, and the forgiveness of his sins. When you visit a sick person, you absolve him from all his iniquities: and when you bury the dead, you send them all to heaven. Of what particular service, then, can great abilities be in your communion?”

† The propriety of alterations in the services of the church was acknowledged by King William and his ministers, when a commission was given to thirty eminent divines for that purpose. Alterations were actually made in six hundred places by this committee, consisting of the most learned men in the church, ten of whom were bishops. After such things, it will be scarcely decent for churchmen to maintain that the liturgy is perfect. At any rate, dissenters are warranted from such authority to say, that alterations are necessary.

which, however, from the strange form of this part of the liturgy, may justly be questioned, they promise what, in general, it is impossible for them to perform, were they so disposed: authority over the children, they have none; that resides wholly in the parents. For persons to promise what it is not in their power to do, is not wise; and to enjoin them to come under such an obligation, is not just. It has therefore been properly considered as a blemish in the church. The affections of nature, the obligations of duty, and the possession of authority, all reside in the father and mother; to them, therefore, belongs the privilege, and on them devolves the office, of dedicating their children to God in baptism.

In the church of England, the sign of the cross is an essential part of baptism. At the best, it is but a superstitious rite of human fancy; but what is very strange, it is, by the constitution of the English church, rendered as necessary as the ordinance itself. Should a person scruple it, as an unlawful thing, his child must go unbaptized; for a clergyman would act contrary to his subscriptions and his vows, should he presume to omit it, and he would not be able to answer to his diocesan for his conduct. It is injurious, too, on the ground of superstition. By the same rule, that the church of England invents one rite, the church of Rome may invent ten. We may defend the use of chrism, salt, spittle, and the other ceremonies of christening in her ritual, by every argument by which the sign of the cross is defended. "But the sign of the cross is a significant rite. It is in token that, hereafter, the person baptized shall not be ashamed to con-

fess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banners, against the world and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant, unto his life's end." So are the Romish rites. The chrism signifies the anointing of the Holy Ghost. Salt put on the tongue, is in token that the speech shall be with grace; and putting the finger into the ear denotes that the person shall listen to the word of truth. If once we go beyond the divine institution, there is no limit.

Dissenters are dissatisfied with that part of the rubric relating to the Lord's supper, which renders it necessary to receive it kneeling. That the original posture was that which persons use at table in receiving food, will be acknowledged by all; nor is the posture destitute of importance, because the ordinance was designed to express the love and condescension of Christ to his disciples, and the intimacy of relation and familiarity of friendship to which they are admitted. All this meaning, which is apparent in the original institution, where Christians sit with Christ at his table, and are entertained by him as his guests and his friends, is lost in kneeling. This posture was of late introduction into the church of Christ, and is connected with transubstantiation: the bread was the body of Christ, and they must bend the knee in token of adoration and homage. An objection to it was felt with peculiar force, in the age of the Reformation, by many excellent men, whose memories retained a lively sense of the dreadful excess to which it had been abused by superstition. It is said, "This is but a trifling matter: why dispute about such a thing as sitting, or kneeling, at the Lord's table?" But the greater the trifle, the more inexcusable is the

church of England in insisting on it as a thing absolutely necessary, and refusing the Lord's supper to those who, from scruples of conscience, cannot receive it on their knees. If the apostle Paul were desirous to communicate with her sons, no clergyman could administer it to him, if, instead of consenting to kneel, he chose to sit. Such harshness and severity savour not of the spirit of the Gospel of Christ: they have been productive of the most baneful effects. Hundreds of good ministers of Christ, nursed in the bosom of the established church, rather than submit to this rite, which they accounted symbolizing with Popery, and countenancing pernicious superstition, suffered the loss of considerable ecclesiastical emoluments, and what was far more dear, the opportunity of preaching the Gospel, and saving the souls of men, at a time when there were but few besides who were qualified for the work*. So mischievous may a small thing be, when rigidly enforced. Had it been left indifferent, or had it been permitted to those who scrupled kneeling to use another posture, what a multitude of evils would have been avoided! Nor is it an inconsiderable evil to hatch the eggs of superstition, and send abroad the noxious brood, to the injury of the Christian religion. Rome is enabled to vindicate all her fantastical rites in the celebration of the Lord's supper, by the example and laws of the English church. The same train of reasoning which the Protestant body employs to defend its practice, will serve as an impenetrable barrier of defence to the Popish hierarchy: for the same authority which sanctions the enactment of one rite, which

* See Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. i.

Christ has not instituted, will sanction twenty; and Rome will come off triumphant in her contest with Canterbury.

To confine the clergyman to the words of the liturgy, in the dispensation of baptism and the Lord's supper, is exceedingly injurious to the edification and devotion of the people. What serious and fervent addresses would the ordinance of baptism draw forth from the heart of a zealous minister of Christ! In the Lord's supper, the amplest scope is given for the exercise of spiritual gifts. It appears to be the very field intended for the display of holy eloquence, by which the devout affections of believers are raised to the highest pitch, and their souls filled with the most delightful consolations, and animated to a faithful performance of all the duties of the Christian life. Talents, zeal, and piety have here the noblest scope; and by the exercise of them, how extensive would be the benefits diffused! But instead of this liberty, there is a rigid form, from which the officiating minister must not depart in any instance. By this arrangement, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, or the most learned and the most able divines, convey not one grain of edification more to the audience, in the dispensation of the Lord's supper, than the inexperienced youth, who was but a year ago emancipated from his college. Surely, these things are not as they ought to be. Such restraints can never be for the edification of the body of Christ.

Discipline, the Dissenters consider as of high importance to the church of Christ, and therefore disapprove of a church where there is none. That this is

the case in the church of England is confirmed by the best of testimonies—her own. “Every Ash Wednesday, after morning prayer, the litany ended according to the accustomed manner, the priest shall, in the reading-pew or pulpit, say, ‘Brethren, in the primitive church, there was a godly discipline, that, at the beginning of Lent, such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend; and instead whereof (until the said discipline may be restored again, which it is much to be wished), it is thought good that, at this time (in the presence of you all), should be read the general sentences of God’s cursing against impenitent sinners, gathered out of the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, and other places of Scripture; and that ye should answer to every sentence, amen.’”

A lamentation of this nature may, perhaps, continue for a few years without offence, as, from peculiar circumstances, there may not be an opportunity of reform; but if it be uttered more than two hundred years, as an annual complaint, people will say that it must be the language either of insincerity or impotence. If insincerity has, upwards of two centuries, had its residence in the bosom of the English church, who would belong to her communion? Or, if it is the effect of impotence, and the church has continued three times the life of man in Egyptian bondage, who would not take flight to societies where there is strength to reform abuses, and exercise the godly discipline of the primitive and apostolical church?

If recourse be had to the New Testament for the description of a church, it consists of those who profess faith in Christ, and corroborate that profession by a holy life. None but those who made a credible profession of their faith in the Saviour were admitted to the communion of the faithful. When they ceased to show their faith by their works, and relapsed into their old iniquities, they were excluded from the society of believers, and were considered and treated as heathen men and publicans.

But, in the church of England, what is there to be found which bears even a distant resemblance to this description? The country is divided into certain districts, called parishes. All the inhabitants of a parish are considered as Christians. Every person in the parish, whatever his character may be, swearer, drunkard, sabbath-breaker, adulterer, or infidel, if he choose, has his children baptized; and when he thinks proper, comes and kneels at the altar, and receives from the hands of the parish priest the consecrated bread and wine in the sacrament. Is not this the case generally through every county in England? But what resemblance does this bear to the communion of the faithful according to primitive usage? Does it represent the union of believers in faith and love, and their obligations and endeavours to put away from among them every wicked person? The likeness is not greater than between the frosty darkness of a winter midnight, and the radiant splendor of a summer's noon.

Excommunication, it may be said, which is a part of godly discipline, is an ordinance of the church of England. But let it be examined and seen when, how often,

and on what accounts, and in what manner, it is pronounced. It should be exercised in every parish. "The clergyman," it is said, "pronounces it when there is occasion." But has he authority to form a process and decree, or is he merely the instrument of pronouncing it? There is a chancellor's court, composed chiefly, and sometimes wholly, of laymen, a tedious and expensive court, in which the cause is investigated, and the sentence decreed. But seldom is this part of godly discipline known, though wickedness everywhere abounds. Unless in instances where causes not Christian induce the process, it is seldom heard of. Nor should it be matter of regret that this is the case; for when the sentence is pronounced on a man, he is immediately stripped of his privileges as a citizen. How naturally does this remind us of a state of things mentioned in Revelation xiii. 16, 17, wherein no man was permitted to buy and sell, but such as had a mark which shall be nameless! Because a man is a notorious sinner, must he therefore be deprived of his civil rights? Must he be prevented from suing for his property, or appearing as an evidence in a court of justice? But, if the excommunicated person do not, in forty days, profess repentance, the king's writ sends him to prison, where he is to continue till he makes satisfaction for his offence, by penance and humble submission. In such a mode of procedure there is something so truly Antichristian, and so replete with the savage persecuting spirit of Popery, that we exclaim, "Church of England, mother of children, are these thy doings?" If she reply, "It is from pure love to my children that I treat them

thus"—“ the voice is indeed the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.”

Ordination by piece-meal is a strange practice, utterly destitute of foundation in the sacred Scripture. From the perusal of this book, without any regard to previous system in the mind, it will appear that whatever ordination may be, when it takes place, the person is introduced to the whole ministry of the Gospel, and all the functions which it includes, without exception. But, in the church of England, there is a tripartite division of powers ; and thrice must the bishop's hands be laid on the head of the candidate, before it receives all the virtue which they contain and impart. The first imposition makes him a deacon ; and the holiest hand can do no more. By this he is qualified “ to assist the priest when he ministereth the holy communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof ; and to read holy Scriptures and homilies in the church ; and to instruct the youth in the catechism ; in the absence of the priest to baptise infants, and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the bishop ;” and he is to attend to the state of the poor. More than these, the deacon cannot do without a second touch. But a Dissenter exclaims, “ Tell me, for I long to know, why a larger measure of ecclesiastical existence is necessary to dispense the ordinance of the Lord's supper than the ordinance of baptism ?” After a deacon is transmuted into a priest, a certain portion of virtue still remains in the ordainer ; and it is not till the third touch of the episcopal hands that the whole of the virtue is conveyed : and then all priestly power is conferred, and the person being now a bishop

has attained the full stature of a perfect ecclesiastical man; and, besides the performance of all the functions, for which he had received authority by his previous ordinations, he has acquired ability to confirm the youth, and to ordain deacons and priests.

But this is not all the fault of the ordination service. There is something in the "form for ordering priests," to which there are stronger objections than words can adequately express. "Then the bishop says, 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven: and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained:'" one might naturally exclaim, "It is Christ that is speaking, he is giving the commission to his apostles, for he never uttered such words to any other men." But when we are told it is a mere man, we are ready to exclaim, "It must be Antichrist, the man of sin, who sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God; for what man can communicate to another the power to forgive sins?" Were we permitted to address ourselves to the bishops and archbishops of the church of England, we should say, "Reverend and right reverend fathers in God, do ye believe that ye have power to communicate the Holy Ghost by the laying on of your hands; and also authority to retain and to remit sins? If you do, show us your commission from Jesus Christ: for we have not been able to find it in the word of God. If ye do not, why do you make use of words so much calculated to mislead, and to deceive, and which will do unspeakable injury to all who are persuaded that you possess such astonishing powers?"

A young clerk just invested with the priestly office, may well think highly of himself, as he has been assured by no lower authority than that of the first ecclesiastical dignitaries of the land, that the Holy Ghost has been communicated to him, and a power to confer the remission of sins. Those who hear him preach are in danger of considering what he says in the pulpit as the decision of the Holy Ghost, whom he received by the imposition of the bishop's hands in ordination. Is there not too much reason to fear that poor ignorant creatures on a death-bed, over whom he pronounces the absolution in the service of the visitation of the sick, will conceive that their transgressions are blotted out, because the clergyman, when ordained, received from the bishop power to forgive sins?

Dissenting ministers have been often branded with the degrading appellations of fanatics and enthusiasts. Ours, however, is rational fanaticism and sober enthusiasm, compared with this. Did we believe and profess that our ministers could confer the gift of the Holy Ghost; or that, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, those ordained among us received power to forgive sins, we should deserve the name of arch-fanatics and arch-enthusiasts. Certainly the largest portion of the most sublimated essence of fanaticism and enthusiasm, which was ever seen or known upon earth, is concentrated here. Exceedingly culpable, therefore, should *we* be, if we were to unite in communion with such a church, and so give the world reason to believe, that we approve her claims.

How dreadful is it that the service by which a person is ordained to the most solemn office should contain

untruths ! That a bishop should introduce a person into the priest's office by saying what is untrue, and by professing to give what he knows he cannot give, is sufficient to rend the hardest heart with grief. That the person too, who is ordained, should hear untruths solemnly addressed to him, in a highly religious act, and profess to believe that he receives what he knows he does not receive, and what neither the bishop, nor archbishop, nor any one else can give, is deeply to be deplored by every friend of truth. Such a commencement of the priestly office augurs ill for its future effects. At the consecration of a bishop, there is a repetition of the same unedifying scene *. The bishop ordaining addresses an untruth to the bishop ordained : the bishop ordained receives the untruth, and professes to believe it as a sacred verity, and to go forth under such an impression to the execution of his exalted office. Infidels have but too much cause to scoff, and to ridicule what is boasted to be the fairest representation of the religion of Jesus Christ.

The church of England very properly requires that the person to be ordained shall have a congregation where he is to be employed : but this is all that can be said in her favour. The relation between a minister and his people is a relation which is founded on choice. Without mutual choice there can be no mutual obliga-

* " Then the archbishops and bishops present shall lay their hands upon the head of the elected bishop, kneeling before them upon his knees, the archbishop saying, ' Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a bishop in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, amen. And remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is given thee by this imposition of our hands : for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love and soberness.' Form of consecrating bishops.

tion. Were a ruffian to drag a delicate maiden by force to the altar, and compel her to go through the ceremony of marriage, would she be bound in duty to honour and obey him? or if, instead of this, he chose a damsel, and went to the altar without her, and the ceremony was so framed, that without asking her consent, or without her knowledge of the affair, she was to be told, that she was bound by law to be his wife, ought she to feel the obligations of a married woman to such a man? The very supposition is absurd. Why should not the same judgment be passed as to the relation between a minister and his congregation, whose union must be equally the result of mutual choice? Among the Dissenters, this mutual choice always exists; but it has higher authority to recommend it to observance. It was the practice, the universal practice, of the church for more than five hundred years after the commencement of the Christian æra: the clergy, from the highest to the lowest, were then elected by the people. Nor should it excite surprise in any, that this was the case; for it is founded in the very nature of things, and has reason herself for a support. An ecclesiastical constitution, which excludes the people from the election of their minister, has absurdity written on its face with a sun-beam.

But what are the regulations of the Church of England in this respect? The people are nothing; they are in the state of the maiden who was married without her consent being asked, and who knew nothing of the matter, till a man came and said to her, "You are my wife; you must love, honour, and obey me." Like this hapless damsel are the people in most of the parishes

in England. A clergyman comes to them with the patron's presentation in his pocket, and thus addresses them: "Dearly beloved brethren, I am your lawful pastor, and you are to listen to my instructions with reverence, to demean yourselves with becoming respect, and to perform every duty to which a minister of Christ has a claim from his flock." If a preacher were to speak thus to a congregation of Dissenters, they would suppose him to have escaped from Bedlam. "We never chose you, (they would say,) we never invited you to be our pastor; and how is it possible for you to say, that we ought in duty to consider and treat you as our spiritual guide? Go whence you came; when we want you for our instructor we will send for you, and call you to the pastoral office among us; but from your present conduct this is not likely soon to be the case."

In the established church, from long custom, these ideas, so congenial to the spirit of Christianity, for so many centuries acted upon by the Christian world, and entering so deeply into the constitution of a Christian church, are entirely lost, the very faintest traces of them are erased from the souls of the people, and of the clergy too. But what supplies the place of the people's choice, and makes a clergyman to be minister of a particular parish? Invention has not been asleep; and, not to the honour of mankind, ways have been found out, of which the best Christian antiquity was ignorant. A father may purchase a living in the church for one of his sons, just as he purchases a commission in the army for another. A person, with a little management to avoid the charge of simony, can get one procured for him: and it is found, in many instances, to be a very

profitable way of laying out a young man's patrimony, and to bring in a more ample return than either trade or commerce. Country squires and noble lords have the sole appointment of hundreds and thousands of the clergy. Multitudes of benefices are in the gift of the crown, and are disposed of by the ministers of state: this is the case with the higher dignities of the church. For all civil purposes, these patrons of livings may be very good and worthy men; but their competency, or their right, to nominate to offices in the church of Christ is a very different thing: though none may dispute their authority to do so in the parliamentary church of England.

An example will illustrate and confirm this position. We should be backward in saying that a man is not a Christian, without sufficient proof. But if the man says himself that he is not a Christian, we may very properly rest on his evidence. On this ground none will blame us for calling lord Bolingbroke an infidel. But he was minister of state in the reign of Queen Anne, and in the highest favour with her majesty; and by virtue of his office had the appointment of hundreds of rectors and vicars, of prebendaries, of deans, of archdeacons, and of bishops too. What a scene! an infidel appointing the highest officers in the church of Christ! A man who regarded Jesus as an impostor, vested with authority to select bishops and priests who shall be best qualified and disposed to advance the ends of his divine mission! What we know to have happened once, may have occurred in numerous instances among the nobility and gentry; for it is not every infidel who openly declares his sentiments. A deist choosing a

Christian bishop, and appointing him to a diocese! The mind is confounded at the sight of so heterogeneous a group. Who can help being a Dissenter?

The introduction of a clergyman to his office is of a piece with his appointment. Instead of being ordained in the presence of his flock, and the people bearing that part in it which, as one of the contracting parties, they ought to bear, the ceremony often takes place at a hundred miles distance, as if it were an affair in which they had no concern. When he comes to take possession of his living, he tolls the bell, he puts his fingers on the latch of the church door, and afterwards he reads the articles in the church. The people, if they please, may look on, and see him do these things. Such observances may make him a clergyman of the church of England; but whether they are adapted to constitute him a pastor of a church of Christ, as delineated in the New Testament, judge ye all that are wise.

Dissenters strongly object to the harsh, rigid, severe, and utterly unaccommodating spirit of the church of England. Of this, the demand of subscription to a long and multifarious list of articles of religion is an undeniable proof. The uselessness of the thing is evinced by facts. In the church of England, subscription is required from every clergyman: among Dissenters the practice is unknown. Every man is left to judge for himself. But there is as much uniformity of sentiments among them as in the church of England. The sentiments of the clergy are not regulated by their subscription. Books written by divines of the establishment, exhibit all the shades of theological opinion, from Priestleyan Socinianism, up to Supralapsarian Calvinism. Who

then can boast of the utility and efficacy of subscription to preserve uniformity of doctrine? But it is worse than useless; it is calculated to exclude from the pastoral office, men of pure integrity, who will not consent to say that they believe that to be truth which they do not believe. Nothing tends more effectually to destroy that delicate sensibility of conscience, which is a Christian's glory, and which ecclesiastical institutions should endeavour, by every means, to preserve and to increase. Instead of aiming at so desirable an object, it would seem as if it were the design of the church of England to defeat it, by presenting such a multitude of things to the faith of the subscribers, as few comparatively can receive. Every clergyman is obliged to declare "his unfeigned assent and consent to all, and everything, prescribed in and by a book, entitled, the Book of Common Prayer, and administration of the sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the church, together with the psalter or psalms of David, and the form or manner of making, or ordaining, and consecrating bishops, priests, and deacons:" and he must *ex animo* subscribe these words, "that the book of common prayer, and of ordaining bishops, priests, and deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God: and that it may be lawfully used: and that he will use the form in the said books presented in public prayer and administrations of the sacraments, and no other." From a church, therefore, which makes such additions to the religion of Christ, and demands subscription to them as of divine authority, and renders that subscription necessary for admission into the pastoral office, many feel compelled to dissent. But while relieved by dissent, they cannot

but condemn the conduct of a church which lays upon the shoulders of her sons such burdens, so grievous to be borne.

An unhappy peculiarity of spirit, which may be denominated "stern severity," runs through the whole constitution of the English church. The Gospel enjoins and breathes gentleness, long-suffering, and bearing with the infirmities of the weak. If this be the genius and language of the Gospel, ought it not to be the genius of the church of England, and her language too? But when I look at her, and hear her speak, instead of standing on Mount Zion, and listening to the kind and tender accents of "peace on earth, and goodwill to man," I seem to be dragged to the foot of Sinai, and while I lift up my eyes in terror, I hear from amidst the smoke, and lightning, and thunder, words of stern rigour and harsh severity, with which not one sound of mercy is mingled. It is still further to be deplored, that what too commonly happens to aged people has happened to her; this sternness and repulsive rigour have increased with her years.

If the most learned, the most holy, and the most zealous man in England were desirous to take orders in the church, and scrupled three of the collects, two petitions in the litany, and the use of the burial service, would he be admitted to officiate as a clergyman? Certainly not. If an eminent saint were to present his child for baptism, and to say to the rector, "I do not approve of god-fathers and god-mothers, my wife and I wish to stand for our child, and take the vows upon ourselves;" would his child be received into the bosom of the church? "No, sir," it would be said, "it is im-

possible to comply with your desire ; you must conform to the rubric." Should the most pious man in the parish say to the priest, " Reverend sir, I scruple kneeling at the altar : pray allow me to sit while I receive the Lord's supper." Would his request be granted ? In all these cases, the clergyman's oath stands in the way, and he dares not, however much he may be inclined. " Why should we give way to such weak people as these ? Is it not proper that they should yield to us, and not we to them ?" This speech was not dictated by the spirit of Christ, but by the spirit of the world. It savours strongly of its pride, haughtiness, and disdain.

Would Christ reject a man from being a minister of his Gospel, because he scrupled the use of a few things in the rubric ? Would Christ refuse to baptize the child of two pious parents, because they disliked god-fathers and wished themselves to devote it to his service ? Would Christ deny the Lord's supper to an humble disciple who desired to receive it sitting, and thought it improper to kneel ? " Lovest thou me ?" would be the question from the lips of Jesus. If that was answered to his satisfaction, there would be no obstacle in the way : the other things would all be overlooked. Is it not evil then in any church to enact regulations which prevent her from doing what Christ would have done ? Does not this more resemble a rigid adherence to the forms of the Jewish law than the mild condescending spirit of the Gospel ?

Perhaps it may be said, " Have you not an unquestionable proof of the kind, lenient, and forbearing temper of the church of England, in being permitted to

bring such accusations against her with impunity? It is a full answer to your charge." Let us not mistake the matter. We are not more obliged to the church for the enjoyment of religious liberty, than to the army, or the navy, or the customs, and the excise. We should as soon think of returning thanks for it to the commander in chief of the army, the board of admiralty, the commissioners of customs and excise, as to the hierarchy of the church of England. Our obligations are to the constitution of our country, in which we glory. It is to this we are indebted for that freedom of discussion which Britons enjoy; and which authorises us frankly to propose our sentiments to the consideration of all those who choose to pay any attention to them. The reflections against Dissenters, which appear, from month to month, in the publications of some of the clergy, but too plainly betray their dissatisfaction with the present state of things; and give us reason to conclude, that if our privileges depended on their inclinations, we should not long continue to enjoy them. This, while it lessens any sense of obligation to that part of the church at least, makes us love the constitution and government the more, and unspeakably heightens our gratitude.

What, if we should add that we do not like to belong to a church which has a mark, not to be seen in the church of Jesus Christ? "A spirit of tormenting fear" seems to haunt her; and, on every occurrence which she fancies to be unfavourable to her interests, a long, loud, and bitter cry is heard,—"The church is in danger, the church is in danger, the church is in danger." From the accession of the house of Stuart to the civil

wars, it was the order of the day. From the restoration to the revolution, severe acts of parliament against the Dissenters were the effect of this doleful cry. During William's reign, it never ceased. When Anne became his successor, it waxed louder and louder, and, at last, so agitated the nation as to endanger its peace. In those days of old, when she uttered this mournful complaint, nothing pleased her better, or seemed so powerful a sedative to her fears, as severe acts of parliament against the Dissenters. It was difficult not to believe that she placed more reliance on the sword of the magistrate than on the power of Christ. Not to descend to every instance, when the Dissenters applied for a repeal of the corporation and test acts, the cry of the danger of the church rang throughout the land; and from the strange events which have since occurred, and which have, in succession, been continued to the present day, the cry has been lengthened out for these twenty years. Dissenters have created the chief alarm; but of late the fear of Roman Catholic soldiers and sailors, and Roman Catholic officers, in the army and navy, has taken off one, at least, of the church's eyes from the Dissenters, and turned it towards Rome; or rather, some of the children are afraid of the Dissenters, and others of the Papists; and between the two, a most doleful cry has been raised; and the danger of the church excites a piteous wailing, which has been made by her most dignified sons, even at the foot of the throne.

From the pulpit, in all its gradations of splendour, from the cathedral to the village church, has the cry resounded. The press has teemed with hundreds of

volumes, thousands of pamphlets, and passages without number, in works of various discussion, all re-echoing the complaint, "the church is in danger." The universities, which are the seminaries of the future pastors of the church, have ever been the first and the loudest in their complaints. Multitudes of the laity have caught the sound, and have felt as much, at least, on the subject as those who raised the alarm.

But is the church so weak? To all human appearance, no establishment on earth is more firm and more secure. The king and queen, and all the royal family, are most cordially devoted to the church of England, with the exception of some Roman Catholic lords; for there is not one dissenting peer, or but one, the nobility of the realm belonging to the established communion. She has the mass of the gentry: when they go to worship any where, it is in her temples and at her altars. The army and navy profess the same faith, and a vast majority of the labouring classes in the community are of the religion of the country. Laws and acts of parliament, without number, secure her in all her rights, and defend every outwork of the citadel. Was ever church so well protected by buttresses without, and faithful and zealous guardians within? And yet there is fear. Is there cause of fear? Does danger exist? If not, it is wicked to raise a false alarm. If they fancy there is danger, when there is none, they are weak, and it is no honour to have any connexion with them. The universities have said, that the church is in danger: South called them the two eyes of the nation, and who will dare to contradict him? Well, if these two eyes look more deeply and profoundly into the building than those

who are without, and know better its real state, there must then be prodigious defects, some radical infirmities, perceived by those who are within the building, which we who are without cannot discover. If this be the case, who that is wise would enter a place so full of hazard? "But was not the church of England once destroyed by her enemies?" Yes; we know the story: but she was the guilty cause of her own destruction. The king and his courtiers wished to rob the good people of England of their liberties. The clergy took the side of the court, and were strenuous advocates for arbitrary power. They persecuted the Puritans, and they might, without danger to the church, have ground them all to powder: but when the clergy set themselves against the civil liberty of their country, the people of England, indignant at this officiousness, broke down the frame of the church, and began that dilapidation which ended in its utter ruin. May it be a lesson of wisdom to the church in all times to come!

But whether the church be in danger or not, the cry is enough to keep a wise man at a distance from her walls. If an infirm man, passing by the side of a stately building, should happen to lose his balance, and fall against the wall, should people instantly sally forth from the door, and others look out at the windows, and all unite in the cry, "You have endangered the house, we are afraid it will fall about our ears," most persons would conclude there was something very much amiss in that building, which no one was sensible of but those within. Who would choose to enter into such a building, or to have any concern with it?

Against the church of Christ, we have divine authority

to assure us, that the gates of hell shall not prevail; and the assurance is confirmed by its existence for more than seventeen hundred years, in opposition to the most powerful efforts of numerous foes. But why is the church of England so much afraid, if she is a part of the church of Christ? We do not love a church of glass, which cannot bear the touch of a man's finger without danger, or without fear—a church which trembles if the winds of heaven blow upon her, and is afraid that the beams of the sun will not merely scorch her face, and make her beauty fade, but threaten the extinction of her very existence. We love a church which can stand both heat and cold, which can endure frowns, and ridicule, and insult, and which can bear mighty blows, and which is not afraid of the malice and enmity of earth and hell.

To the church of England there is yet another objection, which has added ten thousands of members to dissenting congregations, who do honour to their profession, and are eminently useful in advancing the cause of pure and undefiled religion. It regards “the purity of doctrine and life of the ministers of religion.”

While we are supported by these, which appear to us sufficient, reasons for dissent, we are accused of schism. Schism denotes a separation, in heart and affections, from those who are walking according to the institutions of Christ. But wherein are we guilty of this offence? If we denied Christ to be the only head of the church, and separated from such as owned him head, it would be schism; but we assert his sole authority in his church. If we assumed the right to alter, to add

to, or to take away from what he established, it would be schism: but we plead for the integrity of Christ's constitution, and associate with those who do. Show us that we separate from a church of which Christ is the head, whose doctrines are the pure and simple doctrines of the Gospel; whose worship is that which Christ prescribes; which maintains a godly discipline by restraining transgressors from her communion, and admitting only such as appear to be his true disciples; which displays kind forbearance, and gentle condescension, to weak and tender consciences, and from these marks demonstrates itself to be the church of Christ. Show us that we separate from such a church, and we will confess our iniquity, and own ourselves guilty of schism.

But if we separate from a mere parliamentary church, which was formed into shape out of the chaos of popery, by acts of the English legislature, and had no existence before the year 1560, a church, which, in none of its features, bears a resemblance to anything earlier than the ecclesiastical constitution of the fourth or fifth century; and in some, to what did not appear till the ninth or tenth—a church which has so many things to be complained of in its constitution, its head, its doctrines, its worship, its services, its sacraments, its discipline—to call this schism, and charge us as schismatics, because we are not of her communion, and cannot conscientiously declare our unfeigned assent and consent to all her multifarious code:—to call this schism! Surely it is full time that the word were dropped, and that the accusation ceased. Those who would

impose such inventions on the disciples of Christ, instead of his institutions, are the schismatics, not those who separate from them for conscience sake*.

These reasons receive inconceivable force from a testimony given in their favour by two thousand credible witnesses. Acuteness may point an argument, and

* The lawfulness, and indeed the propriety of separation in such a case is confirmed by the authority of men whose judgment has been always highly respected by the most eminent members of the church of England. The celebrated Mr. Hales of Eaton, in his Essay on Schism, says "That where cause of schism is necessary, there, not he that separates, but he that is the cause of the separation, is the schismatic. And when, either false, or uncertain conclusions are obtruded for truth; and acts, either unlawful, or ministering just ground of scruple, are required of us to be performed; in these cases, consent were conspiracy, and open contestation is not faction, or schism, but due Christian animosity. For that it is alike unlawful to make profession of known or suspected falsehood, and to put in practice unlawful or suspected actions." Chillingworth's name needs no epithet of praise. His sentiments on this subject are contained in the following words: "If a church impose and enjoin sin and error, then we must forsake men, rather than God, and leave the church's communion rather than commit sin, and profess known errors to be divine truths: to say the Lord has said so, when he has not said so, is a great sin, be the matter never so small." "I may, without schism, divide from that church which errs on any point of faith, fundamental or otherwise, if she requires the profession of this error among the conditions of her communion." No one ever doubted Dr. Hammond's attachment to the established religion of his country. Writing on schism, he delivered it as his judgment, "that any imposition of what is, or is thought to be sinful, in any communion, will justify people's departing from that communion; and that we must not at all adventure on the least sin, or suspected sin." Bishop Stillingfleet, who was the champion of episcopacy, says, "we think the requiring of doubtful things for certain, is good ground enough for us not to embrace communion with the church, unless it may be had on better terms."— See a Dialogue justifying separation from the church of Rome.

If the reasoning of these eminent Episcopal English divines be conclusive, when they are arguing against the accusations of schism by the church of Rome, it is equally conclusive reasoning, when used, by Dissenters against accusations of schism by the church of England, whose imposing spirit has been fully proved. Thus, out of the mouth of her own sons, we are justified from the charge.

press it deep into the mind ; eloquence may adorn it, and combine beauty with strength ; but there is a line of conduct, there are actions which display the weight of reasons far more powerfully than either oratory or logic. Two thousand clergymen of the English church chose to give up their livings, and expose themselves and their families to poverty and absolute want, rather than violate the purity and peace of their consciences, by declaring their assent and consent to the Book of Common Prayer, and conforming to things which appear to be contrary to the sacred Scriptures. At the Reformation, the mass of the clergy veered about, with every political change of the national faith. When Charles II. was restored to the throne, a multitude of the clergy, who, from all the rigid severity of Laud's episcopal usages, had with ease changed to the different modes of church government and worship, during the suspension of monarchy, found no difficulty in reverting again to the former rites, accompanied with some additional hardships. But those two thousand confessors all appear as faithful witnesses for the strength of these reasons in favour of dissent ; witnesses [who may be depended on for their veracity, as their testimony was of more value in their eyes than the enjoyment of their temporal comforts.

FIRST PERIOD.

FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE DEATH OF QUEEN ANNE.

CHAP. I.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE SEVERAL DENOMINATIONS OF
DISSENTERS.

SECT. I.—*The Presbyterians.*

THIS denomination, which is derived from the Greek word Πρεσβύτερος, elder, signifies a body governed by the united presbyters, or elders of the churches. Presbyterians differ, on the one hand, from those who plead for the distinct order of diocesan bishops, with authority to rule both elders and people ; and, on the other, from such as maintain the right of every Christian congregation, to regulate its own affairs, by the voice of the brethren.

The Presbyterian believes that Christ has appointed but one order of ministers to preach his word and administer the sacraments. To express their diversified qualifications and duties, they are called by the various names of overseer, or bishop; presbyter, or elder; pastor, or shepherd; teacher and minister: but the identity of this office is evident; for the same persons who were, in one verse, called elders or presbyters, are, in the next, styled bishops or overseers*. That these

* Acts xx. 17, 18.

presbyter-bishops formed the highest, as well as lowest, order of ministers, competent to every duty of the sacred function, who can doubt, when they read that Timothy, who is, by episcopalians, revered as a bishop, was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery? The notion of a distinct order of bishops, superior to presbyters, seems to have arisen from the plurality of elders, which obtained in each primitive church; for when the pastors met together in what is called the presbytery, or eldership, he, who was most revered for age, piety, or usefulness, would become a kind of president, or moderator. The chair of courtesy in a meeting of his equals might, by an ambitious man, in course of time, be easily converted to a seat of office, and a throne of power. In support of this opinion, Jerome is quoted as saying, “The church was governed *communi presbyterorum concilio*, by the common council of the elders.” But on the decease of the elder, who had been chosen moderator, another elected by the elders from among themselves supplied his place; and thus, by degrees, the whole pastoral care of the flock devolved on one man.

In addition, however, to these elders, or bishops, who administer the Word and Sacraments, Presbyterians choose, from among the people, some who are called ruling elders, who are considered lay officers, and assist only in the government of the church. They suppose the apostle to refer to these, when he says, “Let the elders, who rule well, be counted worthy of double honour; especially those who labour in word and doctrine.” Hence it is conceived, that there were, in the primitive churches, some who were chosen to rule, and

not to teach. To these, are added deacons, on whom devolve the care of the poor. A meeting of these several officers forms a classis, or class, or, as it is called in Scotland, a kirk session. The minister is, by office, president, or moderator, but has no other than a casting voice, when the votes of the other elders are equal. The vote of the deacons is admitted, only in those questions which relate to the relief of the poor. This court governs each distinct congregation; but, from its decision, appeals may be brought to the next judicatory, which we have now to describe.

All the pastors within a certain district, together with one ruling elder from each parish, form a presbytery. Within its own limits, the presbytery examines candidates for the ministry; gives licences to preach on probation; ordains to the sacred office; confirms the election of ministers by their flocks; pronounces sentence on accusations of erroneous doctrine, or improper conduct; and confirms, or revokes, the sentence of excommunication, which has been passed by the different *classes* on the members of their respective congregations.

A synod is the next court in the ascending scale, and is composed of the members of all the presbyteries within its bounds. Persons who conceive themselves aggrieved by the sentence of the inferior judicatories, may bring their appeal to the synod, which exercises the same authority over the several presbyteries, as these over the kirk sessions. In the church of Scotland there are fifteen synods, each of which meets twice a-year. But the *General Assembly* of the church of Scotland is the supreme court, to which lies a final appeal from every other ecclesiastical tribunal. It is

composed of a certain number of ministers, and ruling elders, chosen from each presbytery. The universities and royal burghs of Scotland also delegate members to the assembly. The king presides by his commissioner, who is always a nobleman, but has no vote. This is the *acmé* of Presbyterian hierarchy, of which we have taken the church of Scotland as a specimen; because, here the stranger may contemplate this form of church-government, established on an extensive scale, rendered illustrious by the sufferings from which it has risen triumphant, adorned by the talents and virtues of its members, and now growing venerable in years.

The advocates of presbyterianism insist chiefly on the scriptural evidence for the parity of ministers; the identity of bishops and presbyters; the authority of the latter to ordain all other ministers; the rights of elders to rule, without asking the consent of the brethren; and the subordination of each congregation to a higher tribunal, or synod. Some, indeed, maintain the divine authority of the general assembly, and of all the other gradations of the presbyterian discipline; affirming, that every pin of the sacred tabernacle is prescribed by the Sovereign Ruler, and revealed in his sacred word. The rise of this communion leads our thoughts back to Wickliffe, who, among other instances of his superior knowledge, maintained, that, in the primitive times, there were but two orders in the church—priests and deacons. The reformers, however, seem to have, at first, supposed that the corruptions of the Christian church were chiefly confined to its doctrines and forms of devotion. Luther, without paying much attention to ecclesiastical discipline, found in the defence of his sentiments and

mode of worship, sufficient employment for his ardent soul. And who can wonder that men just emerged from the thickest darkness, saw not every thing clearly at first? It was reserved for Calvin to give notoriety to an opinion, which, to every unprejudiced mind, must appear sufficiently probable, that the ancient regimen of the church of Christ had been abandoned, and a corrupt system of ecclesiastical discipline introduced, to suit the ambition and avarice of those who had converted the Christian temple into a house of merchandise, a den of thieves. To the reformer of Geneva it appeared, that, if the bishop of Rome may be compared to the image of the beast, set up for idolatrous worship, the other lord bishops of the church were the lofty pedestal on which it had been erected; so that a complete reformation must, with the image, destroy also the base. But Calvin was not the mere architect of ruin. Conceiving that he had discovered in the sacred books, the form of government that Christ originally established in the Christian church, he deemed it the imperative duty of a reformer to restore this primitive code to its ancient authority and use.

Farrel, having induced the inhabitants of Geneva to expel their popish bishop, and his religion, from the city, earnestly importuned Calvin to come and perfect the reformation. This he refused, unless they would engage to submit to his plan of ecclesiastical discipline. Though the Genevese consented, it cannot be supposed that the promiscuous population of a large city and its surrounding territory, who, yesterday, were grovelling in the ignorance and licentiousness of popery, should feel prepared to submit to all that rigour of discipline,

which might suit a single church of real Christians. Some of the magistrates and principal citizens having indulged themselves in amusements, which Calvin and his brethren in the consistory of the church condemned, the stern reformer pronounced on them the same censure, as would have been employed to restrain the licentiousness of the lowest orders of the city. Galled by the yoke, the citizens rose, and expelled Calvin and Farrel from Geneva. This would have been a profitable lesson, had it induced the exiles to reflect, that their model of discipline, allowing it to be drawn from the sacred Scriptures, was there exhibited as the regulation, not of a whole state, but of a church, or a community, gathered out of the world, and formed by divine grace to tempers and habits suited to the high tone of morals, which the Genevese abhorred.

Calvin retired to Strasburg, where he taught theology, and preached the Gospel. When the citizens of Geneva began to cool, they reflected on the purity of his life, the extent of his learning, the celebrity of his labours, and the dignity of his character; while they could not see, without envious regret, the numerous and distinguished scholars, whom his unrivalled fame attracted to the city of his residence. They invited his return, promising to yield obedience to his favourite discipline, in which they faithfully persevered till his death*.

As Calvin was a native of France, as he still resided on the borders of that country, and had dedicated his celebrated Institutes to its monarch, Francis I., the French Protestants embraced the system of their re-

* Bayle, Dictionnaire, au mot Calvin.

nowned countryman. The Presbyterian discipline, adopted by a body so numerous and important, appeared in great splendor. They formed a twelfth part of the population of France, boasted of many towns which were exclusively Protestant, and reckoned among the members of their communion several of the most powerful of the nobility. It was, indeed, their unhappiness, and their error, if not their crime, to have formed great political alliances; so that they were considered almost as a smaller independent state, within the larger, and were in possession of several of the fortified towns of the kingdom. Henry III. gave them, in Dauphiné alone, no fewer than fourteen. The massacre which commenced at Paris, under Charles IX., in the year 1571, destroyed thirty thousand Protestants in two months. At length, through many vicissitudes, and civil wars, they obtained from Henry IV., who had been educated in their communion, the famous edict of Nantz, which was granted in the year 1598, and formed, for nearly a century, the *magna charta* of their religious liberties. But in the year 1685, Louis XIV. crowned a life of infidel debaucheries, with the revocation of the edict, and the horrors of a persecution, which laid in ashes the once flourishing protestant church*.

The Presbyterian discipline was early established in the Protestant cantons of Switzerland. Berne, Zurich, and Basle, however, refused to submit to all the strictness which obtained at Geneva†. When the inhabitants of the Netherlands burst at once the fetters of Rome and Spain, and formed the republic of the united

* Siècle de Louis XIV. par M. de Voltaire.

† Mosheim.

provinces, they hesitated, for a time, between Luther and Calvin. Each of these communions could reckon in the states some very powerful friends and patrons. But the doctrines of Calvin, and the Presbyterian discipline, triumphed in 1751*, and have been, ever since, maintained.

The Palatinate received the first light of the Reformation from the disciples of Luther; but the Elector, Frederic III., afterwards introduced the system of Geneva. The new profession, which was obliged to yield again to its predecessor, for a time, was, at last, firmly established. Mosheim affirms, that the church of the Palatinate holds the second rank among the reformed; for this term, which, with us, is applied to all Protestants, is employed on the continent of Europe to distinguish the Calvinists from the Lutherans. Hesse Cassel, with some other states of the German empire, maintains the Presbyterian discipline, which is also adopted by the Protestants of Piedmont, Hungary, Transylvania, and some parts both of Prussia and Poland.

The Presbyterian discipline was introduced into Britain. For while Calvin was exhausting his mighty powers in various useful labours at Geneva, John Knox became pastor of an English Presbyterian church in that city. This apostle of the Scots' Reformation had been a subtle theologian in the church of Rome; but by reading the works of Jerome and Austin, he learned to value the Sacred Scriptures. Before he was personally acquainted with Calvin, Knox refused a bishopric, which king Edward had offered him; inveighing against

* Mosheim.

prelatical episcopacy as a remnant of popish superstition. For this, Beza, who has been represented as favourably disposed towards the English hierarchy, bestows on him the highest eulogiums*. On the accession of Mary, he fled to Frankfort, where we have seen him struggling for what he deemed purity of worship. After his removal to Geneva, he received the grateful news, that the friends of Reformation had begun to introduce their religion into his native country. He rushed from his peaceable retreat to contend amidst the storm, and laboured with a zeal, rude and boisterous, as his northern climate, to establish Presbytery beyond the Tweed. His eloquence, which was suited to those rugged times; his courage, which delighted in dangers; and his diligence, which knew no intermission, soon secured him a decided majority among his countrymen. Roused by the voice of Knox, the Scotch burst, like an inundation of the ocean, upon the territories of Rome; stripped the churches of their ornaments; demolished the objects of ancient adoration; and often insulted, with unchristian violence, the adherents of the established religion.

In the latter part of the year 1560, was held the first general assembly of the Church of Scotland. As the Reformation had not yet been diffused through all parts of the country, many important places sent no delegates; so that their numbers were small, and few of them were considerable for rank or talents. This assembly, however, voted the introduction of that discipline, which was afterwards established in Scotland†.

* Bayle, Dictionnaire, au mot Knox.

† Robertson's Hist. of Scotland.

Knox presented to a convention of the States, held in the year 1561, his first book of discipline. With some variations, which circumstances seemed to demand, it was a faithful copy of the regimen of Geneva. Whatever zeal the States discovered in setting up Presbytery, they were determined not to restore to the new establishment the church lands. Every proposal for this restitution was treated as "a devout imagination of the ministers." Thus, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland was, from its birth, doomed to comparative indigence.

The House of Stuart was engaged in almost incessant attempts to overthrow the Presbyterian establishment of their country, which they despised as mean, and hated as enthusiastically strict. The violent and arbitrary attempts of the first Charles to force Episcopacy upon his countrymen, though so fatal to himself, were imitated by his profligate son. Some of the best men whom Scotland, or any other country has known, were, in pursuit of this mad project, driven to exile, prisons, and death. But when, at length, the Stuarts were finally hurled from the throne, Scotland acquired by the Revolution the peaceable enjoyment of its beloved Presbytery.

The history of the Presbyterians in England was necessarily interwoven with the introductory chapter of this work. Though the Puritans were, from their rise, partial to the discipline and service-book of Geneva; they, at first, aimed only at exemption from some habits and ceremonies of the English establishment. But, when all hopes of lenity, or moderation, from the court and hierarchy had vanished, a bold application

was made to Parliament for a legal alteration in the discipline of the church. Several ministers, who were decided Presbyterians in their judgment, agreed to present to the legislature what they entitled "An Admonition to Parliament." It contained the plan of a Presbyterian church, the manner of electing ministers, their duties, and their equality in government. The corruptions of the hierarchy were exposed, with the severity of language characteristic of those times. A letter from Beza to the Earl of Leicester, and one from Gualter to a bishop, recommending a reformation in the discipline of the English Church, were annexed to the admonition. They concluded with a petition to the legislature, praying for a reformation in the establishment, by which it might be rendered "more consonant to the word of God, and to the foreign reformed churches." The authors of the admonition, who presented it to the parliament, were, for their boldness, committed to Newgate, October 2d, in the year 1572*.

A second admonition by Mr. Cartwright, and an elegant Latin apology by the prisoners, procured them no redress. The hopes of legislative sanction, which the Presbyterians had indulged, being now extinguished, they determined to erect, at once, a Presbytery. As Mr. Field, lecturer of Wandsworth, a village about six miles from London, was a warm patron of the plan, the first Presbyterian church in England was formed at Wandsworth, November 20th, in the year 1572. Eleven elders were chosen, and their offices inscribed

* Pierce's Vindication of the Dissenters, p. 84.

in a register, entitled *the orders of Wandsworth**. Other Presbyteries were erected in different parts of England, among which are specified Northampton, Kettering, Daventry, and Warwickshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex. A dialogue published in Elizabeth's reign, represents the number of the Presbyterians as amounting to a hundred thousand. Their churches celebrated the Lord's Supper according to the manner of the foreign Protestants. But the intolerance of the government, through several reigns, drove the Presbyterians from their native land. They established, in the wilds of America, their system of ecclesiastical discipline. From this commencement have arisen six or seven hundred Presbyterian congregations. This communion prevails most in the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee.

In the reign of James I., the Presbyterians established themselves in Ireland also, where they have ever since formed an important body. The ministers of the English establishment, having declined the arduous labours to which they were invited among the colonies planted by the citizens of London, in the province of Ulster, the persecuted Puritans were glad to enter and cultivate this neglected field. The Scots were, by their vicinity, led to the north of Ireland, where they formed churches upon the Presbyterian model. The bishops of that country displayed much of the generous, catholic spirit, for which their venerable

* Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. i., p. 266.

† Heylin's History of the Presbyterians.

primate, Usher, has been beloved of all ages and sects ; for they allowed Presbyters to assist them in ordinations, and suffered those who disliked the liturgy, to conduct the worship according to their own views*.

SECT. II.—*The Independents.*

THIS communion is distinguished by maintaining that every *distinct society* of Christians, assembling together for religious fellowship and worship, is, according to the Scriptures, a church, possessed of full powers to regulate its own concerns, and independent of all foreign control. In support of this view of the term *ἐκκλησία*, a church, a writer of distinguished learning and ability, who spent his days in a Presbyterian communion, may be quoted. “ There are in the New Testament but two original senses of the word which can be called different, though related ; one is when it denotes a number of people actually assembled, or accustomed to assemble together, and is then properly rendered by the English terms congregation, convention, assembly, and even sometimes crowd. The other sense is, to denote a society united together by some common tie ; though not convened, perhaps not convenable, in one place. Where the word is appropriated, as it generally is in the New Testament, by its regimen (as the church of *God*, or of *Christ*) or by the scope of the place, it is always to be explained in one of the two senses following, corresponding to the

* Neal, vol. ii., p. 97.

two general senses above mentioned. It denotes either a single congregation of Christians, in correspondence to the first, or the whole Christian community, in correspondence to the second. But in any intermediate sense, between a single congregation and the whole Christian community, which has been called the catholic or universal church, not one instance can be brought of the application of the word in sacred writ.

“ We speak now indeed, and this has been the manner for ages, of the Gallican Church, the Greek Church, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, as of societies independent and complete in themselves. Such a phraseology was never adopted in the days of the Apostles. They did not say the Church of Asia, the Church of Macedonia; but the churches of Asia, or Macedonia. The plural number is always used when more congregations than one are spoken of, unless the subject be of the whole commonwealth of Christ. This is also the constant usage of the term in the writings of ecclesiastical authors, for the two first centuries.

“ It adds considerable force to our argument, that this is exactly conformable to the usage which obtained among the Jews. They never called the people belonging to several neighbouring synagogues, a synagogue, or church, in the singular number, but synagogues and churches, in the plural. Any other use in the Apostles, therefore, must have been as unprecedented as it would have been improper, and what could not fail to lead their hearers into mistakes*.”

* Dr. Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History.

But though the common idea of a national church, composed of all the congregations in a kingdom, is thus exploded as unscriptural; Presbyterians plead for what may be called a *representative* church, consisting of the elders or delegates of several congregations, convened together for the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. To this, also, Independents object, and for a statement of their reasons, they may refer again to the same Presbyterian divine.

“ I know of no way,” says Dr. Campbell, “ of reaching the sense of our Lord’s instructions, ‘ tell it to the church,’ but by understanding his words so as they must have been understood by his hearers, from the use that then prevailed. The word ECCLESIA occurs frequently in the Septuagint, and is that by which the Hebrew word for an assembly or sacred convocation is commonly translated. It is used in the Old Testament in two different but related senses; one is for a whole nation, as constituting one commonwealth or polity, the other is for a particular congregation or assembly, convened in the same place. Now, as the nature of the thing sufficiently shows that our Lord did not employ it in the first of the two senses, so as to require that every private quarrel should be made a national affair, we are under a necessity of understanding it in the last, as regarding the particular congregation to which the parties belonged. It would then be contrary to all the rules of criticism to suppose that our Lord used this term in a sense in which it could not be understood by any one of his hearers; or that he would say congregation, for so the word literally imports, when he meant only a few heads

or directors*.” To this it may be added, that the English and Scotch establishments, though founded upon a very different hypothesis, have, in their formularies, asserted the principle which forms the main pillar of independency—“The visible church is a *congregation* of faithful men.”

It may now be inquired, of whom, according to the sentiments of Independents, are these distinct churches to be composed? Of such persons, it is answered, as the apostles address in their epistles to the first churches. These apostolic letters consider the Christian churches as composed of men on whom the gospel of Jesus Christ had produced those holy effects which made them differ from the rest of the world, and from what they themselves formerly were. Here, again, the language of the established formulary exactly expresses the sentiments of Independents, that a church is “a congregation of *faithful* men.” Hence they say, a kingdom or parish, comprising all sorts of men who happen to be born within its bounds, whether good or bad, can never, without the greatest perversion of terms, be called a church.

It seems to have been in this sense that the first Independents denied the church of England to be a true church, for which they were branded as an illiberal sect, that anathematised all who were not of their communion. But what general would honour with the title of a regiment, or an army, a promiscuous crowd composed principally of men ignorant of all military affairs; though there might be intermingled with them true soldiers, of whom he entertained the highest

* Campbell on the Gospels.

opinion, as worthy to form a Macedonian phalanx? Though the Independents refused to prostitute the name of a church to the promiscuous communion of all who were born and baptized within a district of so many yards or miles; they still believed that there might be among them many excellent persons of whom a church, or congregation of faithful men, might have been formed.

Independents maintain the right of the church, or body of Christians, to determine who shall be admitted into their communion, and also to exclude from their fellowship those who may prove themselves unworthy members. They plead that the right of excommunication is, by the Lord of the church, vested in the congregation of believers, when he says, "if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican*." This exclusion from the fellowship of the church is the utmost punishment which an Independent deems it lawful to inflict for offences against religion. The fulmination of bitter anathemas, the infliction of civil pains and disabilities, well accord with the spirit of the anti-christian beast; but are totally abhorrent from the temper of Christ, who reigns in Zion "as a lamb in the midst of the throne."

* Matt. xviii. 15—17.

The right of each church to choose all those who bear offices in it, is another important principle for which the Independents contend. They agree with Presbyterians in maintaining the identity of presbyters and bishops, and believe that the Scriptures sanction a plurality of presbyters, pastors, or bishops in one church, rather than the common usage of one bishop over many congregations. In those independent churches which have more than one pastor or bishop, he whose age, length of standing, virtues, labours, or usefulness, have given him the precedence, becomes, what archbishop Usher thought the true primitive bishop, the *primus inter pares*, the first among his equals. This president, or chairman, in the council of elders, Dr. Campbell supposes to be the *angel* to whom the epistles to the seven churches of Asia were addressed; for the church of Ephesus had several elders, who were all called bishops. Besides the pastors, independent churches elect some from among the brethren, to the office of deacons; to whom is committed the care of the poor, and of the temporalities of the society.

In tracing the history of their communion, what others would call the origin, Independents consider as the revival of their discipline. They conceive that the New Testament represents the first Christian churches as formed upon their principles, which were stifled by the early corruptions of Christianity, when the spirit of the world established the domination of a few over the consciences of their brethren. As soon as their emancipation from the yoke of Rome, and the reformation of doctrine, had left Christians leisure to attend

to discipline, the Presbyterian system presented itself as a complete restoration of the primitive regimen of the church. It was, indeed, as considerable a step from the Roman hierarchy as could be expected to be taken at once ; but some, when advanced thus far, beheld the scene still opening upon them, and inviting them to pursue their course to a farther improvement.

Slander herself wrote the first records of the Independents. Fuller*, who was an Episcopalian, and no friend to the new sect, acknowledges that “ little can be known of them, but from pens which avowedly wrote against them.” Various malignant reflections are thrown out against the principles of the Independents, on account of the person who is supposed to have been their first promulgator. But amidst the ferment of religious contentions, the most impetuous spirits will, sometimes, gain the precedence, in point of time and publicity, while they are yet far behind others in the maturity or firmness of their principles. It is generally supposed, that the idea of Independency first occurred to one who had not wisdom to pursue the plan : but it is more probable, that many were cultivating in secret the system, which was first announced to the public, in a crude form, by Robert Brown, from whom the earliest Independents were called *Brownists*. Descended from an ancient and honourable family in Rutlandshire †, he was educated at Corpus Christi

* Fuller's Church History.

† One of his ancestors was, by a charter of King Henry VIII., indulged with the singular privilege of wearing his cap in the presence of the king, or his heirs, or any lords spiritual or temporal ; and not to put it off, but for his own ease, or pleasure.

College, Cambridge. Amidst the confusion which reigns in his history, it is difficult to speak with certainty; but he seems to have chosen, for the first scene of his labours, the city of Norwich, where many Dutch emigrants were settled. Here, in the year 1580, among foreigners and natives, he diffused his independent principles with diligence and zeal. He has been reviled as an intolerant bigot for denying the church of England to be a true church, her ministers to be rightly ordained, or her sacraments valid. But all this is no more than has been retorted upon those who separate from the establishment, by elegant scholars in the nineteenth century, which is thought so much more enlightened and liberal than the age in which Brown lived.

Induced, probably, by opposition, he removed to Middleburgh, in Zealand, where he formed a church upon his own plan. It was not long, however, before he returned to England, where he was assisted in propagating his sentiments by one Harrison. After having been, by his own declaration, confined to thirty-two prisons, in some of which he could not see his hand at noon*, he conformed to the establishment, and died with a very indifferent character, rector of Achurch in Northamptonshire. But the principles were immortal, and so rapid was their diffusion, that Sir Walter Raleigh said in the parliament of the thirty-fifth year of Elizabeth: "I am afraid there are nearly twenty thousand of these men; and when they are driven out of the kingdom, who shall support their wives and children?"

* Neal's History of Puritans.

The field of their labours was rendered fertile by their blood. Elias Thacker and John Copping were executed at St. Edmund's Bury, for the crime of dispersing what were termed schismatical pamphlets, containing the principles of the Brownists. But several more of these people being imprisoned, the justices, at the quarter-sessions, were moved by their complaints, and gained the triumph of mercy over the bishops' cruel measures.

While persecuted for renouncing that communion with the establishment which other Puritans yet maintained, the Independents were joined by many eminent men, who risked all that was dear in life, in support of what appeared to them the true Christian polity. Among these was a gentleman of the temple, whose name was Barrow, who became so eminent among them, that they were frequently called Barrowists. Ainsworth, a name as dear to learning as to religion, the rabbi of his age, was driven from his country, of which he formed the brightest ornament, for adopting these opinions. He retired to Holland, where Mr. Johnson, another independent exile, formed a church, of which Ainsworth was chosen teacher. These two, pursued by calumnies to a foreign shore, published there a confession of faith of the people called Brownists. The rich store of oriental learning displayed in Ainsworth's Annotations on the Pentateuch and the Psalms, has raised them high in the esteem of many who have never heard of his writings in defence of independent principles*.

* This celebrated divine was, in his exile for conscience sake, reduced to live on a few boiled roots, having but ninepence a week for his support.

The Independents in London and its vicinity formed themselves into a church, in the year 1592, at the house of a Mr. Fox, in Nicholas Lane. They chose Mr. Francis Johnson, pastor; Mr. Greenwood, teacher; Messrs. Bowman and Lee, deacons; and Messrs. Studley and Kingston, elders. Several persons were baptized without godfathers or godmothers; and the Lord's Supper was celebrated by the members of the church, who sat or stood, as they judged proper. Aware that they were hunted after by the high commission, they often changed their place of meeting, but were, at last, discovered at Islington, on the very spot where the Protestants met, during the Popish persecutions in the reign of Mary.

Fifty-six of them were sent prisoners to different jails about London, where they had the melancholy consolation of finding many of their brethren confined for the same crime of worshipping God in the way they judged most acceptable to him. Hoping that twelve months' confinement had sufficiently broken the spirit of Mr. Smith, his enemies asked him whether he would go to church. He answered, "that were he to do it,

He hired himself as porter to a bookseller, at Amsterdam, who soon discovered the superior learning of his servant, and published his fame, as a man who had more learning in his head than he carried on his shoulders. His death has been variously represented. He had found in the streets of Amsterdam a diamond of great value, for which the Jew who owned it offered him any acknowledgment which he might require. Though poor, his principles were too elevated to demand a price for giving up what he had no right to keep; so that he only requested a conference with some of the Jewish rabbis on the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah. Some affirm, that the Jew, finding his interest insufficient to procure the conference which he had promised, to free himself from the obligation, poisoned Ainsworth. But others maintain, that the parties met, when Ainsworth so confounded the Jews, that they revenged themselves by his death. He died about the year 1622.

he should only play the hypocrite, to avoid trouble ; for he judged it utterly unlawful." To this, one of the commissioners replied, in a style worthy of his cause,—“ Come to church and obey the queen’s laws ; and be a dissembler, a hypocrite, or a devil, if thou wilt.” In a petition to government, these much-injured men complain of such treatment as was worthy of a Spanish inquisition. By these cruelties many of them perished in prison. On the coffin of one of them, whose name was Roger Rippon, his fellow-prisoners inscribed the words of the royal preacher, “ oppression makes a wise man mad.” They were beaten, and doomed to still severer confinement, for not attending the service of the established church in the jail, to which they were brought for renouncing that service as unscriptural.

Barrow requested that he might be allowed a conference, to investigate the truth. But this was refused ; for it was not truth, but submission, which the persecutors wished to obtain. On his trial, Mr. Barrow was asked, whether the church of England were a true church or not ; he replied, “ As it is now formed, it is not ; but there are many excellent Christians who belong to its communion.” He, as well as Mr. Greenwood, his companion in suffering, refused to take an oath, but engaged to deliver the truth. They both returned similar answers to the frivolous questions on which they were tried for their lives. They were condemned to die, and, on the 6th of April, 1593, were hanged at Tyburn, breathing such a spirit of piety towards God, and such prayers for the queen’s prosperity, that when she was told in what manner

they died, she discovered a momentary pang of regret*.

Shortly after, Mr. John Penry, or Ap-Henry, was seized and condemned for the same crime. He had drawn up a petition, which discovers surprising penetration, and announces some incontrovertible truths in a most convincing tone. Yet, should not the man who could see and speak truth so clearly, have been aware, that to present such a petition to the imperious Elizabeth was to march with the forlorn hope to the breach? Though he declared, that not a day passed over his head in which he did not commend the queen's estate to God, his death-warrant was signed by the archbishop. It was immediately sent to the sheriff, who erected the gallows the same day, seized the victim at dinner, and hung him, about five o'clock in the afternoon of May 29th, 1593 †.

An important era in the history of the Independents, was created by the labours of Mr. John Robinson, who gathered a church on these principles, at Leyden. He began with the most rigid sentiments, but he imbibed, from intercourse with the learned congregationalist, Dr. William Ames, more liberal views. In a Latin apology, which he published, he says, "every particular society is a complete church; and, as far as regards other churches, immediately and *independently* under Christ alone." This gave rise to the name of Independents, of whom Mr. Robinson has been considered the father; but as it does not appear that he made any material alteration in the system, the earliest

* Pierce. Fuller.

† Heylin's History of Presbyterians.

Brownists may, with the utmost propriety, be called Independents.

The church of Leyden gradually diminished ; for while the aged members were removed by death, their children married into Dutch families. It was, therefore, determined, after much consultation, that the younger part of them should remove to America, where they might preserve their church from extinction, and afford an asylum to their brethren from England. This independent colony settled at Plymouth, in New England, where they, at first, endured incredible hardships from famine and the neighbouring Indians. That part of the church which remained at Leyden felt no encouragement to follow their brethren, though Mr. Robinson himself was willing, if the majority would have given their consent. At length, an ague deprived them of this beloved pastor, and dismissed him to his rest on the 19th of February, 1624, in the fiftieth year of his age. The Dutch ministers and professors, though Presbyterians, highly esteemed this champion of independency, while living, and at his death accompanied him to the grave, with every mark of affectionate regret*.

Those who emigrated to New England waited for the remainder of the church, with Mr. Robinson their pastor, till they heard of his death, when they chose to that office Mr. Ralph Smith, who went over about this time, and was ordained by fasting and prayer, and the imposition of the hands of the elders of the church. They much encouraged the preaching of the gifted bre-

* Neal.

thren, by which they suffered some disturbances, till, by degrees, the chosen pastors became the only preachers.

In England, Henry Jacob became a distinguished supporter of independency. He was, at first, the apologist of the Church of England, in favour of which he published two treatises against Francis Johnson. But he became, on conversing with Mr. Robinson at Leyden, a convert to his sentiments, recommended them, by the press, in Holland, and came over to England, to reduce them to practice. He called together his Puritan friends, communicated to them his design of forming a separate church, like those in Holland, to which they, seeing no prospect of further reformation in the establishment, consented. At the close of a day of devotion, after a confession of their faith, they joined their hands together, and covenanted with each other to walk together in all the ordinances of God, as far as he had already revealed, or should further make them known. Mr. Jacob, being chosen their pastor, published a statement and defence of their principles, and petitioned the king for a toleration. But, after labouring among them eight years, he removed to Virginia*.

The church chose Mr. John Lathorpe, formerly a clergyman in Kent, to be his successor, and continued to worship in secret, removing from place to place, for nearly thirty years. At last, they were surprised in a house near Blackfriars. Forty of them were dragged to prison; and by these persecutions they were deprived of several pastors, till they chose to the office Stephen More, a wealthy citizen of London. Growing

* Neal.

bold by the favour which the Long Parliament showed to dissenters, they worshipped with open doors, when they were disturbed in Deadman's-lane, Southwark, January 18, 1640, and being summoned before the House of Lords, were dismissed with a gentle reprimand. Some of the peers, curious to see their order, attended their worship, the following Lord's-day, when they professed themselves much pleased with the administration of the word and sacraments, and contributed towards their collection for the poor of the church.

The independent divines who had fled to Holland were allowed to assemble in the Dutch churches, after the hours of the national worship, with the use of a bell to summon the congregation together. Here they declared, that they availed themselves of the liberty and leisure of their exile, to study the doctrine of the Scriptures concerning church government. When the change of the times invited their return, and afforded an opportunity for the declaration of their principles, they published an apologetical narration, which they presented to the House of Commons. This apology was signed by seven ministers, who, being members of the Presbyterian assembly, were called the dissenting brethren*. The Presbyterians, who were now labouring to establish their discipline in the place of the old hierarchy, were offended with this step, which tended to obstruct their schemes. The parliament, glad of the opportunity to elude the shackles of a new ecclesiastical establishment, appointed what was called the Grand Committee of Accommodation, to accomplish a union

* Neal, Pierce.

between the two parties, if possible ; but, if not, to contrive some way in which the Independents might enjoy liberty. These efforts for accommodation came to nothing ; for such was the temper of the Presbyterians, that they reflected severely on the Independents for asserting that uniformity ought to be pressed no further than is agreeable to the consciences of men, and the general edification. “ It seems to us,” said the dominant party, “ that the independent brethren desire liberty, not only for themselves, but for all men.” Hence they called toleration the great Diana of the Independents*. Would to God that no worse idol had ever been adored ! It is the distinguished glory of the Independents to have first recommended a principle so noble as religious liberty to the esteem of the world. Were Britain to erect a statue of gold to the memory of the first patrons of this sentiment, she would but imperfectly discharge the debt she owes to those who have been the source of her wealth, her strength, and her glory.

The intolerance of the Presbyterians received its just punishment, in the disgust with which it inspired the nation, and the ruin it brought on their cause. The leading men in the army either avowed themselves Independents, or patrons of that toleration which had been denounced as the idol of this communion. When Cromwell espoused the same cause, and nominated the principal independent divines to be his chaplains, as well as to fill the most important places in the universities, their triumph was complete. Yet, in the plenitude of their power, liberty, and not authority, was their aim. Their

* Neal, Pierce.

churches were voluntary associations, supported solely by the influence of their principles and character, while the Presbyterians enjoyed the revenues appropriated by the nation to the endowment of religion*.

While General Monk was in Scotland, commissioners were sent into that country, who, being chiefly Independents, encouraged their friends to present to the general assembly at Edinburgh a declaration in favour of congregational churches and religious toleration†. This was attacking presbytery in its strong hold. But what might not be attempted by those who had Cromwell and the army on their side? As their churches had much increased in England, they requested leave of the government to hold a synod, in order to publish to the world an account of their faith and order. To this the Protector consented, with apparent reluctance, apologising for it to the Presbyterians, as necessary to be granted, in order to prevent the effusion of blood. He died before the meeting of the synod, which was held at the Savoy, October 12, in the year 1658‡.

The pastors and delegates of more than a hundred

* Dr. Owen, while dean of Christchurch and vice-chancellor of Oxford, presented the livings in his gift to the Presbyterians. Dr Thomas Goodwin, who was an Independent, and one of the dissenting brethren in the assembly of divines, was made president of Magdalen College, Oxford, where he formed an Independent Church, of which the celebrated Theophilus Gale and Stephen Charnock were members. John Howe, who was then a student in the college, and known to be an Independent, was asked why he did not join them? To which he replied, "Because you lay more stress upon some peculiarities than I approve; if you will admit me upon catholic principles, I will gladly unite with you." Dr. Goodwin's consent is a proof of greater liberality than he was thought to have possessed.—Howe's Life.

† Neal.

‡ Ib.

congregational churches being assembled, deputed Dr. Thomas Goodwin, Dr. Owen, Philip Nye, William Bridge, Joseph Caryl, and William Greenhill, to draw up their confession of faith. It much resembles the Assembly's Catechism, but has, for an appendix, a chapter on the institution of churches, and the order appointed by Jesus Christ, in which the chief principles of the Independents are asserted.

At the Restoration, the Presbyterians struggled to obtain a comprehension within the episcopal establishment, from which the Independents were by their principles excluded. When Venner, and his fifth-monarchy men, raised an insurrection in London; though the Independents were so much hated, that the government would gladly have seized the opportunity to glut its revenge; they were so much dreaded for their determined courage and unrivalled address, that the royal proclamation, by a crooked policy, turned the vengeance on weaker parties, the quakers and baptists. Shortly after, appeared from the press, "A Renunciation and Declaration of the Congregational Churches, and Public Preachers, in and about London, against the late horrid insurrection."

SECT. III.—*The Baptists.*

IT is sufficiently manifest by their name, that this denomination of Dissenters differs from others on the subject of baptism. They believe, that the original

word, which the New Testament employs to express this rite, conveys the idea of immersion, or plunging the whole body under water; hence they conclude, that sprinkling, affusion, or pouring of water, is not baptizing. To this distinguishing sentiment and practice concerning the *mode*, they add one which relates to the proper *subjects* of baptism. While others maintain that not only believers, but their seed also, have a right to baptism, according to the new covenant; Baptists contend that those only who make a personal profession of their faith in Christ, are entitled to the initiatory ordinance of his religion. From this last part of their sentiments, it has been thought more correct to denominate them Antipædo-baptists, or opposers of infant baptism: but this term is defective, as it includes no notice of their opinion concerning baptism by immersion. To the term Anabaptists, or Rebaptizers, they object, as intended to convey an illiberal reflection; for they never baptize any person more than once, and no one, whom they admit to this ordinance, was, according to their views, baptized before. Yet many deny the propriety of the name Baptist, by which they are now generally known; since it seems to imply that they alone practise true scriptural baptism, which their opponents by no means admit.

That the distinguishing names of the various communions, into which the Christian church is unhappily divided, fail to convey just views of their differences still further appears, from the consideration, that to the Baptists may as properly be applied the term Independent, as to those who are always known by that name. Each of these bodies has, from its origin, agreed

in opinion concerning the nature, constitution, and government of the Christian church*. As they rose into notice about the same time, and formed themselves into distinct communions, under the same oppressions and discouragements; their agreement in views of discipline so opposed to the dominant hierarchy, drew closer their bonds of attachment, and produced a disposition to afford mutual support.

Those, however, who differ from other Christians on the subject of baptism, are divided among themselves on doctrinal points, and form two branches, which are called *general* and *particular* Baptists, though they would be better known by the names of Calvinists and Arminians. The general Baptists, who maintain the doctrine of universal redemption, without any individual election to eternal life, are, by much, the smaller portion. The majority of Baptists believe the doctrines usually called Calvinistic, of which, the election of particular persons being one, they are called Particular Baptists. A subdivision has been denominated Seventh-day Baptists; because they believed that the seventh day of the week should still be sanctified by Christians, as a Sabbath. Of these there are now but few.

Some Baptists, reflecting that those who differ from them conceive themselves baptized, admit them to the Lord's Supper, thus practising what is called open, or more properly, mixed communion. As Independents,

* What reason can be assigned for the singular fact, that Baptists have universally been Independents? In the nature of things there might have been Episcopalian, or Presbyterian Baptists. Yet we read of but one solitary instance, Mr. Tombes, who was willing to have conformed to the Episcopal establishment, in every point, but that of baptism.

who practise infant baptism, generally admit Baptists to their communion; in some churches there has been such an intermixture, that it would be difficult to know under which denomination they should be classed*.

The history of the Baptists would, by themselves, be traced up to the first churches; but those who conceive infant baptism to be authorised by Scripture, of course deny them the honours of an antiquity so high and sacred. Crosby, the Baptists' own historian, has claimed the suffrage of the ancients, as decisively in favour of his communion. There were, indeed, early indications of a difference among Protestants on the rite of baptism, and such is the nature of the argument, that the well-informed and liberal, on both sides, will not be surprised that this difference should be still maintained.

By the triumphs of Luther, many were inspired with courage to avow openly the opinions which they had fostered in secret. And to those who reflect on the appearance of mystical incantation, with which the church of Rome administered baptism, and their revolting dogma of the damnation of all infants who died unbaptized, it cannot be surprising that reasonable men should spurn at a ceremony which had lost every characteristic of the religion of Jesus. Some of those who rejected infant baptism, finding that the Reformers were no more willing to allow others to differ from them than were the bigoted Catholics, joined themselves with the peasants, whom the oppressions of the feudal system had roused to arms. Bayle, who seems to have

* See J. Ryland's Funeral Sermon for Joshua Symmonds, and J. Sutcliff's account of the Bedford Church, at the end of it.

taken great pains to amass intelligence on the subject*, affirms, that Nicholas Storch, Mark Stubner, and Thomas Munzer, founded the sect in the year 1521. They are said to have been distinguished, not only by denying the validity of infant baptism, and thus baptizing according to their own mode, all who joined their communion, but also by peculiar notions of Christian liberty, or exemption from authority, both ecclesiastical and civil. But, perhaps this latter part of their tenets has been mistaken by enemies, who were more ready to receive and propagate evil reports, than to examine into their truth.

The insurrection of the German peasants was evidently occasioned by intolerable oppression, and as it was, at first, distinct from all questions of religion, nothing but the coincidence of time and place gave their enemies an opportunity of confounding them with the sect of Baptists. Some of those peasants who took arms, probably were of that communion; and the confusion occasioned by the civil war opened a field for the propagation of their tenets, which they took care to improve. Their principles spread with rapidity over many parts of Germany, and extended also to Moravia and Switzerland. The Reformers, forgetting their own differences, wrote against the rising sect with a unanimity produced by the consciousness, that the Protestant doctrine was charged with all the irregularities of which the Anabaptists were supposed to be guilty. Luther, from whom the Baptists were said to have derived their principles, thundered against them with all the heat of his genius.

* Dictionnaire, au mot Anabaptiste.

But when the leaders of the Protestants, who were themselves scarcely out of the reach of the inquisition, found that their opponents would not yield to the force of their arguments, they employed the secular sword to exterminate the rising sect. This produced reaction. At Munster, an imperial city in Westphalia, the brethren rose, seized the arsenal and senate-house in the night, and running through the streets, with drawn swords, cried, "Repent, and be baptized: depart, ye ungodly." The senators and principal citizens, both Protestants and Catholics, fled and left the city to their uncontrolled dominion. Here they are said to have rushed from fanatical austerities to boundless licentiousness*.

While, however, this is usually recorded as a striking feature in the history of the Baptists, it seems that their distinguishing sentiments had little or no share in these transactions. The brethren of Friezland and Holland condemned those of Munster, and continued to propagate their own sentiments of baptism, in a manner which proves that mankind could not reasonably identify the opinions of the Baptists with the licentious tenets of the insurgents. But this communion received its most important accession in the year 1536, when Menno Simon, a native of Friezland, renounced the church of Rome, of which he had been a priest, and joined the Baptists, who received from him the name of Mennonites. He was a man of eminent worth, and his indefatigable labours were crowned with distinguished success; as well in correcting the internal discipline, and sentiments of the society, as in

* Bayle. Robertson's History of Charles V.

procuring for those sentiments a more extensive adoption. In the United Provinces, their numbers became great, and their reputation high*, notwithstanding their subdivisions, under various names.

While the sword of persecution pursued the Baptists on the continent of Europe, some of them fled to England, where the opposition of Henry VIII. to the papal see, encouraged them to hope that they should enjoy the same liberty of religion which the monarch claimed for himself. In him, however, they found a secular pope; for in 1535, fourteen Hollanders, accused of being Anabaptists, were put to death, and ten others escaped the same fate, only by recantation†. As this sect was supposed to include all that was vile, Henry indiscriminately branded with the name those whom he doomed to death, though some of the martyrs avowed at the stake their abhorrence of those tenets with which they were charged. Thirty persons were, at one time, banished for opposing the baptism of infants. Fleeing to Delft, in Holland, which was then under the yoke of

* The principles on which the States of Holland tolerated this defamed sect, may be learned from a conversation, which the Dutch ambassador, Van Beuning, held with the celebrated M. de Turrenne. "Why should you wish," said the ambassador, "that we would not tolerate them? They are the best and most convenient people in the world. They never aspire to posts of honour, nor rival us in glory. One could wish that, every where, half the inhabitants would decline public offices: there would be more chance for the other half. We have no fear from a sect which maintains the unlawfulness of bearing arms. The Mennonites pay their taxes, and with the money we levy troops, who do us more service than they would. They apply themselves to business, and enrich the state by their industry, without injuring it by the expense and contagion of their dissipations. But they refuse to take an oath! Terrible crime! They are as much bound by their word and promise as if they swore."—Bayle.

† Fox apud Crosby, vol. i. p. 40.

Charles V., the men were beheaded, and the women drowned.

During the reign of Edward VI., among those who fled from Germany on account of the rustic war, there were some who went by the name of Anabaptists. Of this, a complaint was made to the council, which issued a commission to several bishops and other persons, "to try all anabaptists, heretics, and despisers of the common prayer." In tender compassion, they were first to attempt the conversion of the accused by force of argument; but if they failed here, they were to employ flames. Cranmer, being at the head of this Protestant inquisition, gave his enemies too much reason for saying, that his own cruel death was but just retaliation.

On the accession of Elizabeth, Baptists much increased; and notwithstanding Fuller's exultation, "that our countrymen were free from the infection;" it is highly probable that Englishmen, as well as foreigners, were found in their societies. On Easter day, 1575, was discovered a congregation of Dutch Anabaptists, at Aldgate, London. Many were imprisoned, and four of them, bearing faggots, made their recantation at Paul's Cross. Next month, eight Dutch women were banished; but two, for their peculiar obstinacy, were sentenced to be burned. At length, the Baptists, banished from England by the proclamation of Elizabeth, fled to Holland. Here they were at first in communion with the Independent churches; but the difference of their sentiments having created dissensions, they separated and formed distinct societies. The learned Ainsworth had been some time pastor of the Independent church

at Amsterdam, when it was joined by John Smith, who had been a minister of the church of England. Mr. Smith, having declared his objections to infant-baptism, was opposed by Ainsworth, and by Robinson, pastor of the Independents at Leyden. Many controversial pieces were published, on both sides. As Mr. Smith thought there was no one at that time duly qualified to administer the ordinance, he baptised himself, for which he was called a se-baptist*. He afterwards adopted the sentiments of the Arminians, and became the father of the general baptists. This subdivision published a confession of faith, which diverges much farther from Calvinism than those who are now called Arminians would approve.

The Baptists are mentioned as a distinct sect in this country, as early as the year 1608; for Enoch Clapham, writing against those whom he calls sectaries, charges them with separating, not only from the Established church, but from the Brownists, or other Puritans, and retiring to worship in woods, and plant churches in foreign lands. Some, on meeting to form themselves into a Baptist church, felt the same difficulty which had induced Mr. Smith to baptize himself; but they adopted a different method to extricate themselves from the embarrassment. They sent Richard Blount, who understood the Dutch language, to a Baptist church in Holland. Having been baptized according to his own views, he returned and administered the ordinance to Samuel Blacklock, a minister. By these two, all the rest of the society, about fifty persons, were baptized†.

* Crosby.

† Many of their persuasion, however, condemn this as an unnecessary

It is supposed that the first treatise against the baptism of infants, which appeared in the English language, was the translation of a book written in Dutch. Previously to this, however, the Baptists had defended their own sentiments from the press, and published a confession of their faith. They presented to King James, and his parliament, an humble supplication, in which they vindicate their sentiments concerning civil government, and sign themselves “Those who are unjustly called Anabaptists*.”

The Baptists now began to appear as a distinct member of the Puritan body. The Independent congregation, of which Henry Jacob was pastor, having become very numerous, was in the year 1616, divided into several churches; and those of them, who adopted the principles of the Baptists, chose Mr. Spilsbury for their pastor†. This separation from the Independent churches, in order to form a communion distinguished from them, only by these peculiar views of baptism, naturally produced controversy. Those, who condemned their departure from the establishment, had defended infant baptism along with human traditions; but when the Independents, who admitted that the Scriptures were the only rule of faith and practice, entered the lists; Crosby owns that the Baptists had to contend with much mightier opponents.

sary expedition, which was undertaken with the popish notion that the validity of sacraments depends on their regular transmission, in an unbroken succession, from the apostles. It is thought, that the lost ordinance may be recovered by an unbaptized person baptizing others. For who can prove that the apostles themselves were baptized before they administered that ordinance to other believers?—Crosby, p. 100.

* Crosby.

† Ibid.

The Long Parliament having wrested from the hands of Laud the crosier which he had employed as a rod of iron to crush all freedom of opinion, the Baptists came forth to defend their cause on a more public stage. A species of ecclesiastical chivalry was the fashion of the day. Divines selected as the champions of their respective parties, met in these consecrated lists, to determine by single combat the merits of their cause. The Baptists, with all the ardour of recent conviction, threw down the gauntlet, and, by frequent exercise, became skilful fencers in these bloodless duels.

Dr. Featly, a divine of the Established church, was one of the first opponents of the rising sect. He contended against four persons, and by his own confession wrote the record of the conflict, with a pen dipped in gall*. Shortly after this, Mr. Baxter says, he first became acquainted with the Baptists. Some young men had submitted to immersion, and joined a church, which Mr. Tombes had formed at Bewdley, a few miles from Kidderminster. They endeavoured in vain to draw Mr. Baxter into a paper war with Mr. Tombes, but, at length, a public disputation between these two leading men was appointed. They met in the parish church at Bewdley, and disputed from nine in the morning till five in the evening. On Mr. Baxter's side, it was said, that this contest satisfied, not only the inhabitants of Kidderminster, but also Mr. Tombes's own townsmen, except about twenty, who composed his church. But as all such public tournaments are most unhappily calculated to make men contend for victory, rather than

* Crosby, vol. i. p. 153.

truth, so both sides usually claim the victory, which was the case in the battle of Bewdley*.

While the Baptists were struggling for the establishment and diffusion of their principles, the Quakers arose, with most decided hostility to what they called water-baptism. Hence these two parties, from their origin, stood peculiarly opposed to each other; for to contend in behalf of the exclusive baptism of believers by immersion, would be a nugatory warfare, if George Fox and his followers could prove that the only Christian baptism was that of the Spirit.

A public dispute was held at High Wycomb, Bucks, in 1670, between a Baptist and a Quaker†. Four years after, they persecuted each other with books, of which the bitter titles excite regret, that sufferings had not taught them more respect for companions in tribulation‡. William Penn, irritated by the charges which a Baptist had preferred against the Friends, appealed to the whole body for justice. To rouse their attention, Penn's book was given away at the doors of the Baptist meeting-houses. But after an examination, the Baptists pronounced their champion innocent. The Quakers, however, deny that the affair received an impartial investigation§.

More severe conflicts awaited the Baptists. Mr. Henry Denne was, by the Long Parliament, imprisoned for preaching against infant baptism, and for acting upon what appeared to him scriptural principles; for, instead of the unbounded sectarian licence, which is

* Baxter's Own Life. † Crosby, vol. ii., p. 231. ‡ Ibid., p. 294.

§ Crosby's History of the Baptists, vol. ii., p. 295. Gough's History of the Quakers, vol. ii., p. 368.

supposed to have been the sin of those times, the spirit of intolerance still usurped the throne of Deity, by attempting to rule in the empire of conscience.

After the senate had published what we may term an apology for the sectaries, it passed a most disgraceful ordinance, denouncing severe penalties on certain opinions, among which the denial of infant baptism was distinctly mentioned. This law was found too vile to be executed. When Cromwell was rising into power, having determined, for political reasons, to cashier the officers of his regiment, he assigned what he thought would be the least odious pretence, that they were Anabaptists. Yet, in the general tenour of his government, the *Protector* merited that title for his conduct towards the Baptists, whom the advocates for *covenant uniformity* longed to crush.

At the restoration, Major-General Harrison, who was of this communion, being condemned as one of the regicides, died, not merely with calmness, but with joy. Venner's insurrection was the signal for a general persecution of the Baptists; though Mr. Henry Jesse shortly after declared, that Venner himself said, "there was not one Baptist in his party; and that if they succeeded, the Baptists should know that infant baptism was an ordinance of Jesus Christ*."

A congregation of seventh-day Baptists, in London, was disturbed, and the preacher, Mr. John James, was accused by an unhappy wretch of uttering treasonable words. Though it was solemnly sworn by those who were present, that the words were never uttered, he was condemned. His wife presented a petition to

* Crosby.

Charles, who, on hearing the name of the petitioner, said, "Oh, Mr. James, he is a sweet gentleman." But the king afterwards so completely changed his tone, as to say, "the rogue shall be hanged." For once, Charles remembered his promise, and Mr. James was sent to join the noble army of martyrs*.

Upon the infamous statute of Elizabeth, ten men and two women, taken at a meeting near Aylesbury, were required to conform to the establishment, or abjure the realm. Declaring that they could do neither, they threw themselves on the mercy of the court; but as the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, the twelve were condemned to die. Aylesbury was thrown into the utmost alarm at the bloody sentence; for the rest of the Dissenters, who were the principal part of the inhabitants, expecting that their turn would come next, shut up their shops, and abandoned all attention to business. The son of one of the condemned persons rode up to London, to confer with Mr. William Kiffin, who, though a Baptist, had some interest at court. When Chancellor Hyde laid the case before his majesty, Charles seemed much surprised, and promised his royal pardon. But afraid that his father would be pardoned after he was hanged, the son begged for an immediate reprieve; which having obtained, he returned with sufficient speed to save these devoted lives†.

* Crosby.

† Among numerous instances of faithful suffering for God, and almost miraculous interposition of Providence in behalf of the oppressed, we may record the case of Mr. Andrew Gifford. He was a Baptist minister of high repute in the west of England. At Bristol, the principal field of his labours, he was three times confined in Newgate, and once was hurried away to Gloucester. He had been preaching among the colliers in the forest of Kingswood, near Bristol, where his son, who was the centinel,

SECT. IV.—*The Quakers.*

THIS was originally a term of reproach; but it is now generally employed to distinguish an important and singular body of Dissenters, when no disrespect is intended. They call each other by the name of friends, deriving it from the scriptural word, which is translated beloved, and equally signifies *Friends*. But George Fox, having charged Gervas Bennet, Esq., one of the justices of Derby, to tremble at the word of the Lord, and many of them discovering great agitations of body, arising from the emotions of their minds, they received the name of Quakers*. There is no denomination of Christians whose principles render them so conspicuous as the Friends.

They are chiefly distinguished by their opinions con-

was prevented from giving notice of the approach of the informers, by being frozen to the ground. An Independent minister, who, pursued by the same enemies, had been preaching in another part of the wood, lost his life in attempting to escape across a river. But the colliers, hearing that Mr. Gifford was taken, rose in arms for his deliverance. He declined their aid, saying, that he would rather leave his cause with God, who, he doubted not, would order all for the best. The justices gave him permission to visit his wife, who was near lying in, and to settle his affairs. But the informers, as soon as he reached home, seized him and hurried him away to Gloucester, a distance of thirty miles. Thus it was ordered, that he entered the castle just as the public chimes announced twelve o'clock at night. When the six months, for which his mittimus had condemned him, were expired, he desired to be dismissed. The keeper objected, that it was unusual to open the gates at midnight, to which Mr. G. replied, that they were opened at that hour to let him in, and why should they not to let him out? He was discharged; and the next morning, at six o'clock, arrived an express from London, with an order to confine him during life; from which hard fate he escaped by the relentless fury of his enemies, who had hurried him away to prison at midnight.—Crosby.

* Gough's History of the Quakers, vol. i., p. 96.

cerning the Holy Spirit and his influences. They believe that a portion of the Holy Spirit is imparted to every child of Adam. This divine principle, they call by the various names of the seed, the light, the power, the word within. This sacred gift, they suppose, is committed to the free-will of every man to improve; and notwithstanding the depravation of human nature by the fall, they affirm that every one may so improve the heavenly influence, as to be led by it to perfection, even in this life.

To the light, or word within, they seem to appeal, rather than to the written Revelation, for which, however, they avow a high regard. They profess to wait the impulse of the Spirit in every affair; but especially in all that concerns religion, or the worship of God. Hence they have no certain order in their devotions, either public or private. In their assemblies, no Bible, nor any other book, is seen; sometimes prayer is heard, and sometimes preaching; but frequently, instead of either, a total silence is maintained. In their families is seen no constant domestic worship, nor external acknowledgment of God, by giving thanks at meals.

They practise neither baptism, nor the Lord's supper; affirming, that the baptism of the Spirit is all that Christ intended to perpetuate in his church; and that Christians should seek only a spiritual or mystical feast. Though they conform to the usual custom of assembling for public worship every Lord's-day, it appears that they regard not this day as divinely appropriated to religious use. No one is distinguished among them as a minister by a particular dress, nor are any excluded from officiating in prayer or preaching; but every one

speaks according to what he conceives the divine influence upon his mind. Yet their worship is not entirely left to the caprice or presumption of every individual. They differ also from other Christians, by allowing women, as well as men, to be ministers and preachers.

Their public worship is often exposed to illiberal ridicule; not only by the profound silence which sometimes reigns through the whole season, but also by the singularity of their tones and manner, both in prayer and exhorting. A late apologist ascribes this to nature, which, in speaking out of the ordinary key of conversation to a large number, will fall into unpleasant sounds, without the aid of art, the use of which Quakers deem unlawful in the worship of the Deity, where the Divine Spirit should fill and actuate all the powers*. The singing of psalms and hymns, the society of Friends rejects.

Abhorring the secularization of religion by the alliance of the church with the state, they protest against every interference of the magistrate in religion, farther than to protect the subject in the peaceable enjoyment of his principles. Other dissenters condemn tithes, but Quakers alone refuse to pay either them or what are called church-rates: on which account they constantly suffer considerable inconvenience and loss, by the seizure of their goods. As they deem it unlawful for Christians to take an oath, they have, by their firm adherence to their principles, obtained, from some more liberal governments, the singular privilege of having their affirmation admitted in evidence at law;

* Clarkson's Portraiture of Quakerism.

though the laws of England have not extended this to *criminal* cases. They forbid the members of their society to go to law with each other, settling all differences in a much better way, by arbitrators chosen from among themselves. Strenuously avoiding any acknowledgment of established priests, they perform the ceremony of marriage in their own places of worship, and forbid marriages by the priest, on pain of *disownment*, or excommunication. Their speech is peculiar to themselves. Condemning all flattering titles of honour; such as *your majesty*, or *your worship*; and believing that the use of the plural number, when addressing a single person, originated in pride, they invariably employ the singular *thee* and *thou* to a single individual, even though it should be the king himself. All those professions of respect or kindness, which, though current in society, appear to them unmeaning, or insincere, they reject, and cultivate so much circumspection in speech as produces singular taciturnity. Instead of the ordinary names of the days and months, which they abhor as relics of paganism, they adopt the ordinal numbers, calling January the first month, and Saturday the seventh day. In this, however, they were not so singular at first as they appear now; for, in the age of George Fox, many religious persons, who were not Quakers, adopted the same practice, especially the Independents and Baptists.

Quakers are known also by their attire. The founders of the society imitated the dress of the plainest persons in their day; so that, though plain, they were not singular: but as the children adhered, for a long time, to the dress of their forefathers, while all around

altered, they became, at length, remarkable in their appearance. The men sit with their hats on in public worship; but when any one rises to address the assembly, he uncovers his head, and no one wears his hat during the time of prayer. Viewing it as a mark of homage to the Deity, they will never suffer others to share this honour with him, by taking off their hats to any mortal. Condemning war as unchristian, they never take arms.

As their ministers are not distinguished by any particular dress or title, it has been generally supposed that they have none; but there are among them, both male and female ministers, who are supported by the society, only when travelling in the exercise of their ministry. Elders also are chosen to govern the body. These not only inspect the conduct of the private members of the society, and compose the courts or meetings for discipline, but also watch over the doctrine of the ministers, and the public devotions of the society. Deacons are appointed to take care of the poor.

In their ecclesiastical discipline, they may be called Presbyterians; for they have a regular gradation of courts, ascending from the single, or monthly meeting, (which corresponds to the kirk session, or Presbytery,) advancing to the quarterly, and terminating in the yearly meeting, which answers to the general assembly of the church of Scotland. To trace this discipline through all its ramifications would be difficult and tedious: a very hasty sketch of their sacred polity is all that can be attempted.

A monthly meeting is composed of several particular congregations, within a certain district, to attend to the

poor, the education of youth, the reception of members, the conduct of those who are disorderly, and give certificates of membership to those who travel. At the quarterly meetings are produced written answers to certain queries, concerning the conduct of the members, and the attention of the monthly meetings. These are digested into one report, and sent from the quarterly to the annual meeting. Here also are received appeals from the decisions of the monthly meetings. The yearly meeting has the general superintendence of the country in which it is held. There are seven of these in the society. To the one which is held in London, about the month of May, are sent delegates from every part of Great Britain and Ireland. The other yearly meetings are held in the United States of America. This court receives appeals from the several quarterly meetings, and publishes a pastoral admonition to the society, called the yearly epistle. The annual meeting appoints committees. That which is denominated the second day morning-meeting, revises all manuscripts concerning the principles of the Friends, previously to their publication. The yearly meeting, which was held in London in the year 1765, appointed a meeting to be held in that city, to advise and assist in cases of suffering for conscience sake. This *meeting for sufferings* being a standing committee, has the care of several important concerns, which may occur during the intervals of the annual meetings. It is proper to observe, that as there are female ministers in this society, they have their separate meetings, in which the concerns of the sisters are regulated, though still subject to the final decision of the brethren.

The history of the Quakers is comparatively short. The father and founder of the society was George Fox, who was born in the year 1624, at Drayton, in Leicestershire *. His parents, who were reputable, upright people, apprenticed him to a person who dealt in leather and wool, under whom George was often employed to keep sheep. This suited his retired, contemplative turn of mind, and afforded leisure to prepare for the mission to which he at length conceived himself called. He is said to have worn a leathern dress, as at once plain, mortified, and durable. In the year 1647, he began to appear as a public teacher of religion, principally urging the necessity of receiving for our rule the inward teachings of the Holy Spirit.

The royal sceptre of Charles was now broken, and the hierarchy prostrate in the dust; while the Presbyterians, who had the ascendant in the parliament and metropolis, could not succeed in bowing the nation to their yoke; because they were opposed by the army, which favoured the Independents, who were the advocates of religious toleration. The places of worship belonging to each parish were frequently occupied by unauthorised teachers, and red as well as black coats were seen in the pulpit. The former compulsory uniformity being exchanged for a chaotic diversity, good Christians were terrified and distracted by a deluge of new and strange opinions; not aware that the tumult would, ere long, subside, and all things find their level. But when the various sects were, by their mutual collisions, heated into an excessive ardour for their distinguishing peculiarities, many were dissatisfied with

* Gough's History of the Quakers, vol. i., p. 60.

them all, and professed to be seeking for truth, which had not yet appeared. To these Fox addressed himself in a favourable moment*.

Before he had any definite sentiments concerning discipline, which, sooner or later, in some form or other, all societies must adopt, he confined himself to the doctrine of divine influence on the mind, which all parties professed to maintain, and to which the Puritans had, in a powerful degree, directed the public attention. At first, this apostle of quakerism delivered his sentiments in the parish churches, where he is charged with interrupting the preachers, and disturbing the congregations in their worship. This occasioned his first imprisonment in Nottingham, 1649.

At Derby, in the year 1650, George Fox was again committed to jail, for speaking in the place of worship, and on this occasion the Friends received the name of Quakers. The magistrates, who, under colour of justice, violated at once all rules of justice, and all feelings of humanity, towards George Fox, were called Independents. But Independents were now in favour, and many plumed themselves with the name, who afterwards assisted to sacrifice them to the vengeance of the prelates. Had George Fox occupied the seat of Oliver Cromwell, Britain would have swarmed with Quakers, of whose spirit and behaviour the Friends would now be heartily ashamed.

The principles and conduct of the followers of George Fox, in many respects so novel, and abhorrent to all the ideas which then prevailed, often provoked the intolerance of the leading men of the day. In a letter to the

* Gough, vol. i., p. 70.

Protector, the Quakers complain, that though there are no penal laws in force, obliging men to comply with the Established religion, yet their friends are imprisoned for refusing to take an oath ; for not paying their tithes ; for disturbing the public assemblies and meeting in the streets ; while some have been whipped as vagabonds. Like most other sects, their infancy was stained with some errors ; and their extravagances, especially those of the female preachers, their distortions, symbolical actions, and prophetic denunciations, were supposed to justify the injuries heaped on them. To this day, these blots on their history are studiously recollected by their enemies, with the addition of many circumstances, of which they never were guilty.

The Friends soon tacitly admitted the impropriety of their conduct in disturbing the assemblies of other Christians, by the abandonment of the practice ; and as their numbers increased, amidst all the persecution which they endured, they hired, in the year 1654, a place for their own worship, called the Bull and Mouth, in St. Martin's-le-Grand, London. They were still, however, distinguished by the itinerant labours, both of men and women. Francis Howgill and Edward Borough, were the first who preached in London. John Camm and John Audland travelled to Bristol, where their preaching excited great attention. Their public assemblies were, for want of room in their meeting-houses, held in the open fields, even in winter ; where thousands sometimes attended. Many embraced their doctrine ; so that Bristol has ever since been a principal seat of the society. This excited envy, and led to their expulsion from the city, by the magistrates, who

appear to have given too much countenance to persecution.

As their numbers increased, the Protector, whose eyes were everywhere, deeming it prudent to guard against danger from this quarter, required George Fox to promise not to disturb his government. This engagement was to be given in writing, but expressed in whatever terms the writer chose to employ. George, therefore, wrote to the Protector by the name of Oliver Cromwell, declaring, that "he did deny the wearing or drawing of a sword, or any outward weapon, against him or any man*." Cromwell afterwards admitted Fox to an interview, when the preacher delivered some wholesome truths, which were received in a manner highly to the Protector's honour. He who held the sceptre of Britain, and the balance of Europe, allowed the Quaker to remain covered in his presence†.

Yet the sufferings which the Friends endured under the Protectorate expose the fallacy of the extravagant praises bestowed on this period, and prove, that whether the government were Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Independent, the mass of the people have ever been graceless heathens. George Whitehead, preaching at Nayland, in Suffolk, was seized and whipped, till the sight of his body, covered with blood, roused even the populace to plead for mercy. James Parnel, a well-educated youth of sixteen, having joined the society, and commenced preacher, was confined in jail till death released him. Even the females endured injuries, of which humanity cannot record the history without a sigh, nor decency read without a blush.

* Gough, vol. i., p. 156.

† Clarkson's Portraiture of Quakerism.

While George Fox himself drank to the dregs of the bitter cup which intolerance had mingled for his new society, he still laboured for its welfare, with the courage and patience of a martyr. He began to find that discipline, which had been the idol and the overthrow of the Presbyterians, was essential to the well-being, and even to the existence of his system. Some attention was paid to this subject, in the year 1660, and six years afterwards, the father of the society travelled extensively to perfect the machine, and set it in complete motion. On this delicate point differences arose, even among the Friends; for two preachers of Westmoreland, offended with the new regulations, and particularly with the institution of the female meeting for discipline, separated from the main body, and held meetings with such as adopted their views.

At the Restoration, the Quakers participated in the general joy. They probably expected more liberty from the dissolute Charles, than they had enjoyed under the firm grasp of Cromwell; or thought that, at all events, their condition could not be worse. In this, however, they were mistaken. Hundreds were, indeed, liberated at first, but thousands were afterwards imprisoned. They had before been abused in defiance of authority; now to the licence of the rabble was added the vengeance of the throne. Charles, in spite of the word of a king, given at Breda, seized the first opportunity to persecute for religion. When Venner's insurrection furnished a pretext, the Quakers were singled out for vengeance; for though they were well known to be innocent, they were also known to be defenceless*.

* Gough, vol. i., p. 442.

When the conventicle act was in force, "The behaviour of the Quakers," says Burnet, "had something in it that looked bold. They met at the same place and hour as before. None of them would go out of the way, but when they were seized, they went all to prison together, where they staid without petitioning for release, and when discharged they refused to pay any fees. As soon as liberated, they returned to their meetings again, and when they found the place shut up by the magistrates, they assembled before the doors. Thus they carried their point, for the government grew weary of them, and were glad to let them alone.*"

Their meeting-house, at Horsely-down, near London, was, by an order of council, 1670, pulled down; but they assembled on the ruins. They were insulted and knocked down. One of them, as he lay bleeding on the ground, was so wounded in the head, that the brain was visible. When the soldiers were asked how they could behave so cruelly, they replied, "If you knew our orders, you would say we were merciful†."

Amidst these sufferings, persecution appeared as stupid in policy as it was infamous in morals; for in the year 1666, the celebrated William Penn, son of the admiral, joined their society. By the death of his father, who at first turned his Quaker son out of doors, but was afterwards reconciled to him, he came into possession of considerable property. The father had been privy to some of the disgraceful secrets of Charles and his brother James, to which it is added, that he advanced considerable sums to the extravagant king; so that he was in high favour at court, and his son also,

* Burnet's Own Times, p. 271.

† Gough, vol. ii., p. 344.

though a Quaker, was treated by both the brothers with great indulgence. Charles granted to William Penn and his heirs, that province in America, which lies on the western side of the river Delaware*. To this he acquired a more legitimate right by a fair purchase from the aboriginal Indians, and settled it by the name of Pennsylvania, of which Philadelphia was the capital. His treaty with the Indians, and the code of laws which he drew up for the new settlement, have received the highest eulogiums. It is, however, by a mistake, that writers affirm this to have been the first instance of just dealing in taking possession of the American soil. The Independents had already taught William Penn to purchase of the first owners†.

Quakers had, before this period, been known in America. They “settled first among the Antinomians in Rhode Island. Here they were unhappily successful, not only in seducing the people to attend to the mystical dispensation of the light within, as having the whole of religion contained in it, but also to oppose the good order, both civil and sacred, erected in the colony‡.” Mary Fisher and Ann Austin were the first; they came from Barbadoes to Boston, July, 1656, and were soon followed by eight more. They were imprisoned, and then exiled from the colony. When the Quakers were, by beat of drum, prohibited from entering the territory, an inhabitant of Boston, whose name was Nicholas Upsal, entered his protest, and warned the magistrates not to bring the guilt of persecution on

* Gough, vol. ii., p. 515.

† Neal.

‡ Cotton Mather's History of New England, vol. i., p. 311, as quoted by Neal.

the country. For this wise and salutary remonstance, he was heavily fined.

The Quakers returned, and were shamefully treated. Three of them endured the indignity of having their ears cut off; but the infamy rested on those who inflicted the punishment. They were first ordered to be sold for slaves; and though this law was so bad that it was not executed, it was followed by another, which doomed them to death, if found within the colony, after a certain time. Four persons suffered death by this statute of blood.

It has been observed, that these persecutors were Independents. Whatever they were, their conduct deserves to be held up to execration. But it should be remembered, that there was no other religious profession but the Independents in the colony; and let the promiscuous mass, which forms the population of any country, be in a manner compelled to mingle with the purest communion under heaven, by having no other to which they can resort, and its genuine complexion will soon be changed*. The Independents in England wrote, by the pen of Dr. Owen, a letter to dissuade

* Historic impartiality requires us to observe also, that the Quakers are charged with such offences against civil society, as imperatively demanded the interference of the magistrate. Neal says, "that Deborah Wilson went through the streets of Salem without decent clothing; and that G. Bishop defends this, saying, 'she was a modest woman, but, that bearing a great burden for the hardness and cruelty of the people, she went thus as a sign; when the wicked rulers laid hold on her, and sentenced her to be whipped.' Thomas Newhouse went into the meeting-house at Boston, with two glass bottles, which he broke against each other, saying, 'Thus shall ye be broken.' But though these are only a few of the extravagances which justified coercive measures, the magistrates should have known how to preserve the peace without the sacrifice of humanity."—Neal's Hist. of New England, vol. i., p. 342.

those of New England from pursuing the bloody work. This epistle observes, that the truth cannot be betrayed, or any way injured, by allowing it liberty to speak for itself*.

Quakers were now found, almost in every quarter of the globe. Several travelled to Holland and Germany. "Mary Fisher, a religious maiden," says Gough, "felt a religious concern upon her mind to pay a visit to Sultan Mahomet IV., then encamped with his army near Adrianople." She arrived safely in the camp, and was treated with great deference by the prince, who appeared to approve of all she said. Two others went to convert the Pope himself. The Turk, however, remained a Mahometan; nor did his holiness turn Protestant.

James Nailor, a preacher in the society, fell into extravagances, and, on a public entrance into Bristol, suffered himself to be addressed by divine names and honours. The committee of parliament, instead of sending him to Bedlam, took vast trouble to torture him. The Friends, in general, condemned his conduct, of which he himself afterwards repented.

On the death of Charles II., the Quakers are said to have joined in congratulating James, his successor. Hume has given their address as follows:—"We are come to testify our sorrow for the death of our good friend Charles, and our joy for thy being made our governor. We are told, that thou art not of the persuasion of the church of England no more than we, therefore we hope that thou wilt grant us the same liberty thou allowest thyself. Which doing, we wish thee all

* Gough, vol. i., p. 122.

manner of happiness." But Gough * denies that they sent, on this occasion, any congratulatory address; and justly asks, how they could, with any truth, call Charles their good friend, who left, at his death, nearly one thousand five hundred Quakers in prison.

In the benefits of James's indulgence, the Quakers participated equally with other Dissenters. They wisely availed themselves of their undoubted birthright; without inquiring by what authority, or from what motives, it had been bestowed. In their thanks to the king for his indulgence, they say, "We rejoice to see the day that a king of England, from his royal seat, should assert this glorious principle, that conscience ought not to be restrained, nor people forced, for matters of mere religion †."

William Penn was now so great a favourite at court, that Bishop Burnet speaks of him rather angrily, for being so busy to do a Popish king service. It was, indeed, a curious phenomenon to see these extremes meet; to behold a Quaker the active courtier of a prince, who, to please his priests, attempted to deliver up his dominions to the Pope, and thus barter three crowns for a crucifix. Penn, who had been before, by some of his own society, suspected of leaning towards Rome, was reviled by his enemies as a Jesuit in disguise. But when the bishops were committed to the Tower by James, and were informed, that the Quakers charged them with the death of some of their society, Robert Barclay paid them a kind visit; assuring them, that though they had too much reason, it was not their wish to remember injuries against them, in the day of their

* Gough, vol. i., p. 160.

† Ibid., vol. iii., p. 289.

adversity. Who can contemplate this unexpected scene,—one of the persecuted Quakers paying a charitable visit to the prelates of the persecuting hierarchy, now immured in a gloomy prison,—without calling to remembrance the captive prince, who, while dragging the chariot of his haughty conqueror, consoled himself by watching the revolution of the wheels, which reminded him, that he who was exalted to the skies to-day, might to-morrow change places with him who is trodden in the dust?

CHAP. II.

STATE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

SECT. I.—*State of Religious Liberty during the Reign of William.*

THE tyranny of James II. having alarmed the friends of freedom, and his inordinate haste to introduce Popery alienated the hearts of all good Protestants, the chief men of the country turned their eyes to William, Prince of Orange, who, by his mother, the daughter of Charles I., was nephew, and, by his wife, was son-in-law, to the king. Urged by a variety of considerations, he complied with their wishes. A peculiar providence directed his way in the ocean, and guarded him from the attacks of a superior fleet, which was waiting to intercept his course. He landed at Torbay, on the 4th of November, 1688. James's friends and troops forsook him; and being seized with fear, he descended from his throne, and sought a sanctuary in France. The convention which was assembled placed the crown on the head of William and of Mary. The convention being exalted into a parliament, their attention was immediately directed to the numerous and important matters which required to be speedily settled, in consequence of the change which had taken place. To delineate the *revolution settlement* belongs to the department of civil history; the

province of the writers of this work, is to record what relates to the cause of religion.

When William was meditating his arduous expedition, he sent over a confidential declaration, which was published, “promising to endeavour a good agreement between the church of England and all Protestant Dissenters; and to cover and secure all those who would live peaceably under the government, from all persecution on account of their religion*.” Some of the most considerable and moderate among the clergy, anxious that the Dissenters should form one body with them in opposition to the enemies of the Protestant faith, had the frankness to acknowledge that the church had treated them with severity; and promised, that if, by their united means, they were delivered from their present alarming condition, the Dissenters should find them disposed to do everything in their power to bring about a *re-union*, on terms of conformity, to which they could easily submit. Forgetting past injuries (and to forget injuries so numerous and aggravated was no ordinary piece of heroism), the Dissenters cordially co-operated with their fellow-Protestants in opposition to Popery; and, throwing the whole weight of their influence into the scale, gave a powerful ascendancy to the Prince of Orange.

The Revolution being happily accomplished, the nonconformists naturally looked for the fulfilment of the fair promises which had been so lately made. Whatever William had promised on this head he was desirous to perform. Trained up during his early years in a private station, and mixing with mankind on the

* Dr. Calamy's Abridgment of Baxter's Life, &c., vol. i., p. 422.

footing of equality, he had more knowledge of human nature than usually falls to the lot of those who are born in a palace and educated for a throne. It was also an advantage to him, that, from his childhood, he had seen different religious sects living together in harmony, and performing the various duties which they owed to each other in society, with as much good will as if all had thought alike. Persons living in a country where they have seen none but those of their own creed, are apt to think of other denominations with a kind of horror, and imagine them to be little better than demons in human form. From such bigotry William was entirely free : he had a liberality of mind in respect to different religious denominations enjoying the rights of conscience and of worship, which, with the exception of Cromwell, none of the rulers of England had ever possessed. Sensible, therefore, of the importance of uniting all English Protestants, he was no sooner fixed on the throne, than he endeavoured to carry into execution the plans which he had formed for the accomplishment of so desirable an end.

In consequence of the changes produced by the Revolution, a considerable number of offices, both civil and military, being left vacant, required proper persons to fill them. It was William's wish to be able to call into public service the talents of any of his Protestant subjects, without exception ; and he thus expressed his sentiments to both houses of parliament : — “ As I doubt not but you will sufficiently provide against Papists, so I hope you will leave room for the admission of all Protestants who are willing and able to serve. This conjunction will tend to the better uniting you

among yourselves, and the strengthening you against your common adversaries*. The intimation of the king's desire gave rise to a motion in the House of Lords, for introducing a clause in the bill, by which it was proposed to take away the necessity of receiving the sacrament, in order to make a man capable of enjoying any public office, employment, or place of trust. This was when the House was deliberating on measures for abrogating oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and appointing other oaths. But here the king was advanced more than a century before the greater part of his subjects; for when the clause was reported to the house it was rejected by a large majority. Seven peers, however, entered their protest†.

Unable to attain an object so desirable, his majesty's ministers resolved to make a second trial; and perceiving they could not prevail to set aside a sacramental test, they introduced another clause, by which it was provided, that a person should be sufficiently qualified for any office, employment, or place of trust, who a year before, or after his admission, or entrance thereunto, did

* Bishop Burnet says, that the king put this into his speech without the knowledge of his ministers, vol. ii., p. 8. Calamy, p. 439.

† The Lords Delamere, Stamford, North, and Grey, Chesterfield, Wharton, Lovelace, and Vaughan. The substance of the reasons of their dissent was, that an hearty union among Protestants was a greater security to the church or state than any test which could be invented; that this obligation to receive the sacrament was a test on the Protestants rather than on the Papists; that as long as it was continued there could not be that hearty and thorough union among Protestants as had always been wished, and was at this time indispensably necessary; and, lastly, that a greater caution ought not to be received from such as were admitted into offices, than from the members of the two houses of parliament, who are not obliged to receive the sacrament to enable them to sit in either house. Calamy, p. 439, 40. Tindal's Continuation of Rapin, vol. xvi., p. 175.

receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, either according to the usage of the church of England, or in any other Protestant congregation; and could produce a certificate under the hands of the minister and two other credible persons, members of such a Protestant congregation*. But this clause had the same fate as the former, being rejected by a great majority of the house. Six peers, however, were so strenuous for it, that they recorded their dissent. Foiled in both these attempts, the king was obliged to remain deprived of the services of such of his subjects as dissented from the Church of England, and could not, with a good conscience, communicate in the Lord's Supper according to her rites. His zeal in their cause gave great offence to the high church bigots, and created a bitter enmity against him, which ceased not with his life.

Besides these rejected measures, the king had two other objects in view respecting the dissenters, in both which he was exceedingly desirous of success. The one was a *comprehension*, which would, by the removal of those exceptionable parts of the rubric, to which they generally objected, bring the greater part of the Presbyterians into the church; the other was a *toleration*, for the benefit of such as could not even then conscientiously enter the establishment. The former failed, the latter was crowned with success.

From what unexpected quarters benefits, great and lasting, sometimes arise!—and the ancient proverb may be still not improperly used, ‘Is Saul also among the prophets?’ Some of the bishops scrupled to take the oaths required by the new government. Just before

† Calamy, p. 440. Tindal, vol. xvi., p. 175.

they left the House of Lords, they closed their parliamentary career with a motion for a bill for granting toleration to Protestant dissenters, and another for a comprehension. The proposal for a toleration was immediately taken up, and on the 28th of February, in the year 1689, the Earl of Nottingham presented the bill to the House of Lords. It was, he said, for substance the same with one which he had formerly drawn up and laid before parliament, in the reign of Charles II., when the nation was so violently agitated about the *bill of exclusion*, by which a Papist was to be declared incapable of sitting on the English throne. The bill appeared so reasonable and so necessary for the public welfare, that it does not seem to have met with any serious opposition in passing through its different stages in either house ; and it received the royal assent on the 24th of May, in the year 1689. Some, indeed, proposed to give it a limited duration, that the dissenters might be kept upon their good behaviour, and at the close of the period might have it continued, abridged, or annulled, according to their deserts. But more generous sentiments prevailed. The good disposition of the nation at the time, for granting what all allowed to be conducive to the public tranquillity, was urged as a reason for granting it, without a clause which must hurt the feelings of those whom it was designed to please.

The act savoured of the spirit of the times. Socinians and Arians were excluded from its protection. In order to enjoy the benefits which it confers, dissenting ministers were obliged to sign thirty-five articles and a half of the church of England. From the others,

relating to episcopal government and ceremonies, they were exempted. As the ministers were, at that time, nearly all of a mind in matters of religion, and as the signing of human creeds, provided they believed them to be agreeable to the word of God, was not accounted a hardship, no complaints were made, nor any burden felt. On the contrary, they received the boon with joy; and the ministers of the different denominations in London put themselves under the protection of the law, by signing the doctrinal articles of the church. Mr. Baxter, at the time, delivered in a paper, containing an explanation of various passages in them, which appeared to him of doubtful import: in this many of his brethren concurred with him*.

The word *toleration*, when used in matters of religion, has but an ungracious sound. The subject presents itself in two points of view: "Man renders homage to God; and God receives homage from man." When we say man renders homage to God, that another man, or a body of men, should tolerate me to perform my duty to my Creator, seems strange, though, from custom, we can bear to hear it. But, when we view the subject in the other light, that God receives homage from man; then, for the legislature of a country, or for any human being, to permit or tolerate God to receive homage from me, according to my conscience, is an expression which shocks the feelings, and the impropriety is too glaring to be borne.

But it is necessary to remove from the beginning of the nineteenth to the end of the seventeenth century, in order to judge aright of this act of parliament,

* See Calamy, pp. 469, 476.

which was an invaluable blessing to the Protestant Dissenters, and which has diffused its benign influence, from the day in which it passed, to the present hour. England had embraced the reformation from Popery, almost a hundred and fifty years before the Revolution; but, during all that time, a toleration by statute of such as held different sentiments in religion from the established church, was unknown. The stern rigour of Elizabeth, the unfeeling ill nature of James, her successor, and the cold-blooded cruelty of the first Charles, never admitted the thought of such a measure. From the ascendancy of the Long Parliament, till the Restoration, though none were molested for their religious sentiments, but such as were considered to be hostile to the government, (which as new and feeble, was in dread of plots and conspiracies,) yet there was no legal security for their protection. After the Restoration, the unprincipled libertinism of the second Charles, left him at his ease to break through the solemn promises which he had made in the days of his exile, and to be a persecutor of the Non-conformists, during the greater part of his reign. His brother James, while granting indulgence to those Protestants who separated from the establishment, is too justly supposed to have had no other object in view but the gratification of the Catholics, and the humiliation of the church; so that when he had thus gradually exalted those of his own faith, and their numbers were sufficiently increased, he would, by their means, have crushed both the parties of Protestants.

Here is the first legal toleration that England ever knew. But was it so great a matter, it may be said,

for an English legislature to act according to an avowed principle of the religion which they professed? For religious liberty, which is one of the unalienable rights of human nature, springs out of the very essence of Christianity; and to persecute for conscience sake has ever been regarded as one of the discriminating marks of the antichristian beast*. But let it not be forgotten, that it required a long series of ages to make this plain to the dominant party in church or state. The primitive Christians, who lived under pagan tyranny, and felt with bitterness "the iron entering into their soul," may well be supposed to have imbibed from the sacred Scriptures, as they actually did, the pure doctrine of liberty of conscience. They lay under no temptation, from either ease or interest, to open the breast to error; and accordingly, whenever they speak on this subject, their words are words of peace and truth. But no sooner was the sword of power wrested out of the hands of their adversaries, than those who professed Christianity, began to use it in a most unjustifiable way, and too plainly showed that the doctrine of religious liberty was one which they but very imperfectly understood. The spirit of intolerance gradually increased, till the established form of religion became impatient of contradiction, and would not bear a rival, nor even allow a harmless dissident to live in peace†. In this mournful state things continued

* I have long looked on liberty of conscience as one of the rights of human nature antecedent to society, which no man could give up, because it was not in his own power.—Burnet's History of his Own Times, vol. ii., folio, p. 216.

† Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, 3 vols. 8vo., illustrate the subject with peculiar force.

nearly a thousand years. Even after the reformation from Popery, whatever alteration for the better there might be in other points, there was but little here, and so thoroughly contaminated was the blood which flowed in the veins of the Reformers, with the poison of an unchristian intolerance, that none of them could learn the doctrine of Christian liberty, or feel the obligations of the Gospel to cease from persecuting those who could not assent to the established creed. Holland had certainly the advantage here, and displayed unspeakably more of a tolerant disposition than any other country in Europe. But, at last, in England, one thousand six hundred and eighty-nine years after the birth of Christ, it is recognized as a principle by the legislative body of the nation—that Christians living peaceably under the government of their country, and holding no principle contrary to its welfare, ought to be allowed to worship God in a manner agreeable to the dictates of their conscience.

What a deadly blow to the notion, that the farther we look back the wiser and better our ancestors were! Surely the church is but in leading strings, and has scarcely escaped from infancy to childhood, when its members have not learned that their neighbour has as good a right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, as they have themselves; and that it is the most inhuman cruelty to hinder him from rendering his homage publicly to God, merely because he thinks proper to do it in a way different from them.

It may excite surprise, that the rights of conscience should be so late a discovery. The age of the Reformation, though so fruitful of good to all succeeding

ones, and though so powerful in its reasonings against the pretensions of Rome, presents us with no specimens of note in favour of the general principle, that conscience is accountable to God alone. In the following generation, we may turn over the writings of Lutheran and Calvinist, of Episcopalian and Presbyterian divines, for this doctrine, in vain. Among the Independents, in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, the doctrine of religious liberty and of the rights of conscience will first be found. But, as usual in first discoveries, it will be found blended with prejudices and mistakes. In the time of the Long Parliament, Dr. Owen wrote an Essay on Toleration, which embraces the grand principles with as much precision as could be looked for from an orthodox divine of that contending age*; and his work may be considered as a successful step towards a full view of the truth. About the same time, the doctrine was agitated by several very able laymen, and stated in still greater fulness, as well as confirmed by reasoning of a still more general and philosophical nature. Among these, Milton is entitled to the most honourable mention, as the enlightened assertor of every man's right to worship God according to his conscience, whatever his sentiments may be†. When a nation is agitated with internal commotions, especially if liberty be the object in dispute, the minds of men are roused to extraordinary exertions. If there be a soul which has a spark of energy in it, that energy is called forth, and frequently gives birth to great ideas on subjects of the

* See Owen's Sermons and Tracts, folio.

† Treatise of the Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes.

first importance to the happiness, both of individuals, and of society, which would not have been produced in a season of repose. Cromwell's army was an army of reasoners. They disputed about religion, every man with his Bible in his hand; and as they had all been formerly constrained to appear to think alike, they now broke their bonds asunder, threw them indignantly away, and began to argue, that every man has a right to think for himself, without constraint from either priest or king. Mr. Baxter, who was, for a time, with the army, as chaplain to Whalley's dragoons, mentions that the soldiers of Cromwell's regiment, argued in behalf of the rights of conscience and private judgment in matters of religion; and maintained, that it was not the province of the magistrate to restrain them by his control. The Remonstrants in Holland said many things well on the subject: their situation sharpened their wits, and gave soundness to their judgment. And the ingenious Bayle, in his commentary on Luke ii., 14, 23, treats the doctrine of religious liberty with singular ability. But our own country has the honour of producing the ablest writer on this important doctrine. It is to the justly celebrated philosopher, John Locke, that the world is indebted for the best treatise on religious liberty*. By

* Being obnoxious to the English court, which was aiming to introduce Popery, (for to wicked rulers the best men will always be the most obnoxious,) he retired into Holland, in the year 1683, and there wrote his first letter on toleration, which he dedicated to the celebrated Limborch. It was published in the year 1689, in Latin, and translated into English the same year. Happily for the world, it was answered in the year 1690, by Mr. Jonas Proast, M. A. of Queen's College, Oxford, who was afterwards an archdeacon. In reply to this gentleman, Mr. Locke, the same year, published his second letter on toleration. An answer to this, from the same pen, appearing the year after, 1691, the public was

this great man, the subject of religious liberty is so well treated, the foundation is laid so strongly, and so deeply, the statement is so luminous, the reasoning so convincing, and the matter so applicable to all denominations of professors of religion, to all countries and times, and so remote from every thing of local prejudices or party spirit, that for any one to bring forward a confutation, is to prove that the sun does not give light at noon day. The youth who wishes to improve his mind by just ideas of what he owes to rulers, in respect to the exercise of his religion, and what rulers owe to him, does not render justice to himself, till he has made himself master of Locke's letters on toleration. What do we owe to those who dig truth out of the mine, or finding it already dug, but rough, unpolished and obscure, rub off excrescences, smooth its surface, and present the diamond in all its excellence and lustre!

A third benefit, which King William wished to secure for the Dissenters, was *a comprehension*. This name was given to a plan for making such alterations in the liturgy of the church as it was conceived would bring a considerable number of Dissenters, especially of the Presbyterians, within her pale, and to her altars. This had been promised to the Presbyterians, then the most powerful party in the country, by Charles II., before he left the continent, to ascend the British throne, but was set aside by the Act of Uniformity. When the bad consequences arising from the want of it were felt,

honoured with Mr. Locke's third letter "for toleration," in the following year. After twelve years' silence, an answer appeared to this likewise. Mr. Locke had begun a fourth letter in reply, but death called him away from the work, which is to be found in its imperfect state among his posthumous pieces.

it was proposed to the non-conformists, in the year 1668, and a plan for that purpose was drawn up by Sir Matthew Hale, and was patronized by Sir Orlando Bridgman, Lord Keeper of the Seals; but so violent was the spirit of the times against everything of the kind, that the Commons refused to have the bill even brought into the House. Towards the close of Charles's reign, when the Bill of Exclusion was the subject of warm debate, a comprehension became a matter of consideration, but nothing could be done.

When the long and hasty strides which James made towards Rome alarmed his Protestant subjects, the bishops and clergy felt an uncommon terror; and in that petition for which the seven bishops were sent to the Tower, they mentioned "their tenderness for the Dissenters, in relation to whom they were willing to come to such a temper as should be thought fit, when that matter should be considered and settled in Parliament and convocation*." The business was carried still further, for Archbishop Sancroft, foreseeing that a change was at hand, and sensible of the evil effects at the restoration, for want of something being ready, in the way of preparation, for composing the differences of the Episcopalians and Presbyterians, in order to the formation of such an ecclesiastical constitution as would unite them both in the establishment, resolved to have a plan in readiness to be proposed and adopted, if such an event should take place. Accordingly, he set to work himself, and called in the assistance of several of his brethren of the clergy, Dr. Patrick, Dr. Sharp, and others, to make a draught of such alterations and

* Calamy, p. 383.

amendments in the offices of the church, as would be likely to satisfy the Dissenters. "The design was to improve and enforce the discipline of the church, to review and enlarge the liturgy, by correcting of some things, and adding of others, and (if it should be thought advisable by authority, when the measure should come to be legally considered, first in convocation, then in Parliament) by leaving some few ceremonies, confessed to be indifferent in their natures, as indifferent in their usage, so as not necessarily to be observed by such as should make a scruple of them. And this good design was known to, and approved by the other bishops, who joined with the archbishop in this petition *."

The new government being soon after settled, under King William, the metropolitan could not conscientiously take the oaths required, and, after a time, retired from Lambeth Palace (the first instance of the kind on record) into private life. Those who differ from him in judgment, must honour him for his integrity. He who quits the see of Canterbury, with all its revenues and all its honours, to bury himself in obscurity, has a claim to the character of, at least, an honest man. One of the last acts of Sancroft, and his non-juring brethren, was, as has been mentioned, to move that, besides the toleration, a bill for a comprehension of the Dissenters might be brought in. It was introduced and debated, but it was a bolder and more difficult measure than the former. The Act of Toleration permitted them to live out of the church; but the Act of Comprehension

* See Wake, Bishop of Lincoln's speech at Sacheverel's trial. Calamy, pp. 383, 384.

would have brought them to its very altars. *That* conferred neither honour nor emoluments ; but *this* introduced hundreds of new candidates for every department of ecclesiastical office. But as it was patronized by the king, it was supported by his ministers ; some of the prominent parts were debated by the Lords ; and it was carried, that kneeling at the Lord's Supper should not be required of those who scrupled to receive it in that posture.

There was a clause in the bill that a certain number of persons, partly of the laity, and partly of the clergy, should, as in the days of Henry VIII., and of Edward VI., be appointed to weigh maturely the subject, and to form a scheme of such alterations and amendments in the affairs of the church as might be deemed expedient, and to present them to Parliament, to be incorporated into the bill, and adopted by the legislature. This measure was, by many of the temporal peers, urged with great force of reasoning. "But (says Bishop Burnet) I, at that time, did imagine that the clergy would have come into such a design with zeal and unanimity, and I feared this would be looked upon by them as taking the matter out of their hands ; and for that reason I argued so warmly against this, that it was carried by a small majority to let it fall. But I was convinced, soon after, that I had taken wrong measures ; and that the method, proposed by the Lords, was the only one like to prove effectual : but this did not so recommend me to the clergy, as to balance the censure I came under, for moving, in another proviso of that bill, that the subscription, instead of assent and consent, should only be to submit with a promise of

conformity *.” In consequence of this, the following commission was issued by the king to thirty divines, ten of whom were bishops† :—

“ Whereas the particular forms of divine worship, and the rites and ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent and alterable, and so acknowledged; it is but reasonable that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigencies of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place and authority, should, from time to time, seem either necessary or expedient.

“ And whereas the book of canons is fit to be reviewed, and made more suitable to the state of the church; and whereas there are defects and abuses in the ecclesiastical courts and jurisdictions, and particularly there is not sufficient provision made for the removing of scandalous ministers, and for the reforming of manners, either in ministers or people; and whereas it is most fit that there should be a strict method prescribed for the examination of such persons as desire to be admitted into holy orders, both as to their learning and manners.

* Burnet, vol. ii., p. 10.

† Ten of the commissioners were then bishops: viz., Dr. Lamplugh, Archbishop of York, Dr. Compton, Dr. Mew, Dr. Lloyd, Dr. Sprat, Dr. Smith, Sir Jonathan Trelawny, Dr. Burnet, Dr. Humphreys, and Dr. Stratford, who were the bishops of London, Winchester, St. Asaph, Rochester, Carlisle, Exeter, Salisbury, Bangor, and Chester. Twenty other dignitaries were added to them: as Dr. Stillingfleet, Dr. Patrick, Dr. Tillotson, Dr. Meggot, Dr. Sharp, Dr. Kidder, Dr. Aldridge, Dr. Jane, Dr. Hall, Dr. Beaumont, Dr. Montague, Dr. Goodman, Dr. Beveridge, Dr. Battely, Dr. Alston, Dr. Tennison, Dr. Scott, Dr. Fowler, Dr. Grove, and Dr. Williams.

“ We, therefore, out of our pious and princely care for the good order, and edification, and unity, of the church of England, committed to our charge and care, and for the reconciling, as much as is possible, of all differences among our good subjects, and to take away all occasion of the like for the future, have thought fit to authorise and empower you, &c., and any nine of you, whereof three to be bishops, to meet from time to time as often as shall be needful, and to prepare such alterations of the liturgy and canons and such proposals for the reformation of ecclesiastical courts, and to consider of such other matters as in your judgments may most conduce to the ends above mentioned*.”

When the commissioners met, Dr. Jane and some others deserted them, and would have no concern in the business. But the rest set vigorously to work, in order to accomplish the design for which they were appointed. Concerning the fruit of the labours of such men, posterity may well desire to be informed; because, for learning, for moderation, for respectability, as they stood high in the judgment of their own age, so they have maintained an equal degree of celebrity among literary men down to the present day.

Dr. Nichols, who wrote a volume in defence of the church of England, records some particulars in respect to their proceedings †. To Dr. Calamy we are in-

* Calamy, pp. 446, 447.

† They began with reviewing the liturgy, and first they examined the calendar; in which, in the room of apocryphal lessons, they ordered certain chapters of canonical Scripture to be read, that were more to the people's advantage. Athanasius' creed, being disliked by many, because of the damnatory clause, it was left to the ministers' choice to use it, or change it for the apostles' creed. New collects were drawn up, more agreeable to the Epistles and Gospels, for the whole course of the year; and these, the Doctor tells us, were drawn up with that eloquence and

debted for a more circumstantial account of their proceedings, "which in the main (says he) I have reason to think is right, though in some respects defective *."

brightness of expression, and such an heat and flame of devotion, that nothing could more affect and excite the hearts of the hearers, and raise up their minds towards God. He says, they were first drawn up by Dr. Patrick, who was reckoned to have great skill in liturgical compositions: Dr. Burnet added to them yet further force and spirit: Dr. Stillingfleet afterwards examined them with great judgment, carefully weighing every word in them; and Dr. Tillotson had the last hand, giving them some masterly strokes of his free and sweet flowing eloquence. Dr. Kidder, who was well versed in the oriental tongues, made a new version of the Psalms, more agreeable to the original. Dr. Tension made a collection of the words and expressions through the liturgy, which had been excepted against, and proposed others in their room, that were clear and plain, and less liable to exception. Other things also were proposed that were left to be determined by the convocation. As, 1. That the cross in baptism might be either used, or omitted, at the choice of the parents: 2. That a non conformist minister, going over to the church, should not be ordained according to the common form, but rather conditionally, much in the same manner as the baptizing of infants is ordered in the church, if there be not evidence of their being baptized before, with the addition of the episcopal benediction, as was customary in the ancient church, when clerks were received that had been ordained by heretics. Dionys. Alexand. cap. Euseb. Hist. E. lib. 7, cap. 2. Conc. Nic. 1, cap. 8. Just. sive Anth. Resp. ad Orthod. Resp. 18. Theod. Hist. Eccl. lib. 1, cap. 8. in which way of ordaining Archbishop Bramhall had given a precedent, when he received some Scotch presbyters into the church.—pp. 95, 96.

* An account of the proceedings of the commissioners, to prepare matters for the approaching convocation, in the year 1689.

The committee being met in the Jerusalem chamber, a dispute arose about the authority and legality of the court. (The bishop of Rochester, though he had so lately acted in an illegal one, being one of those that questioned it.) The grounds of this scruple were, the obligations the clergy lay under, by act of parliament of King Henry VIII., not to enter into any debates about making any alterations in church affairs, without the king's special and immediate privacy and direction first given concerning such alterations. It was answered, that that must be done either by an act of the king's own judgment, or by a private cabal (both which ways would be very exceptionable), or else by his Majesty's commission to a certain number of ecclesiastics, to consult about and prepare what was necessary to be altered, as it was the present case; moreover, the commissioners pretended not to make these alterations obligatory by virtue of a law, but only to get them ready to lay before the convocation.

As his book was written soon after the time, when most of the members of the commission were still alive, had

The very reports being not so much as to be referred to the privy council, least they might be subject to be canvassed and cooked by lay hands. However, the bishops of Winchester and Rochester, Dr. Jane, and Aldridge, withdrew dissatisfied; and the rest, after a list of all that seemed fit to be changed, was read over, proceeded very unanimously, and without any heats, in determining, as follows, (each article, as soon as agreed upon, being signed by the bishop of London,) viz.

“ That the chaunting of divine service in cathedral churches shall be laid aside, that the whole may be rendered intelligible to the common people.

“ That, besides the psalms being read in their course as before, some proper and devout ones may be selected for Sundays.

“ That the apocryphal lessons, and those of the Old Testament, which are too natural, be thrown out; and others appointed in their stead, by a new calendar, which is already fully settled, and out of which are omitted all the legendary saints' days, and others not directly referred to in the service-book.

“ That, not to send the vulgar to search the canons, which few of them ever saw, a rubric be made, setting forth the usefulness of the cross in baptism, not as an essential part of that sacrament, but only a fit and decent ceremony; however, if any do, after all, in conscience scruple it, it may be omitted by the priest.

“ That likewise, if any refuse to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper kneeling, it may be administered to them in their pews.

“ That a rubric be made, declaring the intention of the Lent fasts, to consist only in extraordinary acts of devotion, not in distinction of meats; and another to state the meaning of Rogation Sundays and Ember weeks; and appoint that those ordained within ‘*the quatuor tempora*,’ do exercise the strict devotion.

“ That the rubric which obliges ministers to read or hear common prayer publicly or privately, every day, be changed into an exhortation to the people to frequent those prayers.

“ That the absolution, in morning and evening prayer, may be read by a deacon; the word priest, in the rubric, being changed into minister, and those words, ‘and remission,’ be put out, as not very intelligible.

“ That the *Gloria Patri* shall not be repeated at the end of every psalm, but of all appointed for morning and evening prayer.

“ That those words in the *Te Deum*, ‘Thine honourable, true, and only Son,’ be thus turned, ‘thine only begotten Son.’ Honourable being only a civil term, and no where used *in sacris*.

“ The ‘*Benedicite*’ shall be changed into the hundred and twenty-eighth psalm; and other psalms likewise appointed for the ‘*Benedictus*’ and ‘*Nunc Dimittis*.’

“ The versical after the Lord's Prayer, &c. &c., shall be read kneeling,

he introduced into his account anything contrary to truth, or dishonourable to the church, there is not a

to avoid the trouble and inconveniences of so often varying postures in the worship. And after these words, 'Give peace in our time, O Lord,' shall follow an answer, promissory of somewhat on the people's part, of keeping God's laws, or the like; the old response being grounded on the predestinating doctrine taken in too strict an acceptation.

"All high titles, or appellations of the king, queen, &c., shall be left out of the prayers, such as 'most illustrious, religious, mighty,' &c. &c., only the word sovereign retained for the king and queen.

"Those words in the prayer for the king, 'grant that he may vanquish and overcome all his enemies,' as of too large an extent, if the king engage in an unjust war, shall be turned thus—'prosper all his righteous undertakings against thy enemies,' or after some such manner.

"Those words in the prayer for the clergy, 'who alone workest great marvels,' a subject ill interpreted by persons vainly disposed, shall be thus—'who alone art the author of all good gifts;' and those words, 'the healthful spirit of thy grace,' shall be, the Holy Spirit of thy grace, healthful being an obsolete word.

"The prayer, which begins, 'O God, whose nature and property,' shall be thrown out, as full of strange and impertinent expressions, and besides, not in the original, but foisted in since, by another hand.

"The collects, for the most part, are to be changed for those which the Bishop of Chichester has prepared; being a review of the old ones, with enlargements, to render them more sensible and affecting, and what expressions are needful, so to be retrenched.

"If any minister refuse the surplice, the bishop, if the people desire it, and the living will bear it, may substitute one in his place that will officiate in it; but the whole thing is left to the direction of the bishops.

"If any desire to have godfathers and godmothers omitted, and their children presented in their own names to baptism, it may be granted.

"About the Athanasian Creed, they came at last to this conclusion. That, lest the wholly rejecting it should, by unreasonable persons, be imputed to them as Socinianism, a rubric shall be made, setting forth, or declaring the curses denounced therein not to be restrained to every particular article, but intended against those that deny the substance of the Christian religion in general.

"Whether the amendment of the translation of the reading psalms, (as they are called,) made by the Bishop of St. Asaph, and Dr. Kidder, or that in the bible, shall be inserted in the prayer-book, is wholly left to the convocation to consider of, and determine.

"In the litany, communion service, &c., are some alterations made, as also in the canons, which I cannot yet learn so particular account of as to give them you with the rest, as perhaps I may hereafter be able to do." Thus far my friend's narrative.—Calamy, p. 452-455.

doubt, considering the temper of the age, but it would have met with deserved contradiction and exposure.

The alterations which were deemed expedient, having been agreed on, it was designed to lay them before the convocation, which was assembled in the month of December, for this purpose. But, in the choice of a prolocutor by the lower house, the preference of Dr. Jane to Dr. Tillotson blasted every expectation of success; and they would not so much as take the subject into consideration.

Nor had the general bill better success in the House of Commons. There was a considerable party adverse to the new government. Many were so strongly attached to the church as it was, that the idea of alterations filled them with disgust and horror. Others thought, that to yield to the desires of the non-conformists was degrading to the establishment. But what most astonished the warm advocates of the bill, was, that many members, who had always acted as friends of the Dissenters, were hostile to the measure. This was particularly the case with those who, without particularly concerning themselves about religious disputes, acted upon the broad principles of general liberty. They are said to have reasoned thus:—

“ If this bill pass into a law, two-thirds of the dissenting ministers will enter the establishment. They will, in consequence of this, acquire the *esprit de corps* of the clerical order: at any rate, their successors will. Our clergy were never the friends of liberty, but have always clung to the throne; and if they have themselves been caressed and secure, we have found them to be the advocates of prerogative, and unconcerned about the

rights of the people. The Puritans, the Non-conformists, and the Dissenters, have, on the other hand, been the steadfast assertors of the liberties of Englishmen*. If all the present ministers remain without the pale of the church, they and the people will form a considerable body to balance, along with the state whigs, the opinions of the clergy, and by that means serve effectually for the preservation of the freedom of the English constitution. Should they, in consequence of an act of comprehension, enter the church, all these advantages will be lost. Those who remain Dissenters, will be few in number and inconsiderable, their influence will be small, and there is danger that the toleration granted will not meet with due respect, nor remain in force. Whereas, if the number of those who continue out of the church be considerable, they will have an influence which will be beneficial to the cause of freedom, and the act which tolerates them will remain inviolate."

From such views, they voted against the bill, and it was thrown out. Dr. Calamy speaks of the failure of the comprehension bill with bitter and deep regret. But, at this distance of time, we are able to take a more enlarged view of the subject than his circumstances could possibly present. The alterations proposed and made in the standard and services of the church, by such men as Tillotson, Burnet, Stillingfleet, Patrick, Sharp, Kidder, Beveridge, Tennison, Scott, Fowler, Williams, &c., justify the faults found with

* So absolute was the authority of the crown (in the reign of the Tudors) that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved by the Puritans alone. And to this sect the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution.—Hume's History of England.

them by Dissenters, and stand to this day as heralds, incessantly proclaiming that there are many things (six hundred alterations were made) in the church of England which stand in need of alteration and amendment. Of the attachment of these divines to the church of England not a doubt can be entertained; their writings render that unquestionable. As to their abilities, natural and acquired, no age of the English church, either before or since, can produce at once such a number of superior men as were in that commission; and in many respects they enjoyed advantages far beyond those persons who, in the dawn of the reformation, compiled the liturgy.

By the rejection of the bill, the church sustained a double loss. Instead of being enabled to take the benefit of the improvement of these excellent men, which would have rendered the service the first of liturgical compositions; to be compelled, for more than a hundred years longer, to use the obsolete, the harsh and uncouth phraseology of the sixteenth century, when our language was in a rude unpolished state, is an injury of no ordinary size. To deprive herself, likewise, of the services of so many hundreds of learned, pious, excellent, and zealous ministers, who would have returned to her communion, was a loss which words cannot express.

But, whether the exclusion of the dissenting ministers from the establishment, by the failure of the bill, has been beneficial or detrimental to the highest interests of our country, and of mankind, is a question of a very different nature. The beneficial influence of the Dissenters, on the preservation and establishment of political liberty in England, may be safely left to the

decision of the best patriots and the most enlightened friends of freedom, who have no connexion with their religious sentiments, and with their dissent. The other part of the question may be conceived to be of more difficult resolution. Some, indeed, may think it clear as light, that, not allowing the Dissenters to return to the bosom of the church, was to the detriment of religion, as they would in that case have had an opportunity of preaching to far more numerous congregations.

But it is not upon mere numbers that the question rests : something else must be taken into the account. Some religious societies are voluntary, and their union is the result of choice. Others are formed by a geographical line ; and vicinity of habitation is the reason of their assembling for worship in the same place. Between a voluntary society of worshippers, and a mass of people living within certain boundaries, and called a parish, the difference is immense. Among four hundred of the former class the probability of doing good is equal at least to two thousand of the latter. Taking the whole of England on an average, this is the case, unless the proportion be rated too favourably for a parish congregation. In support of this assertion, many things might be adduced ; for it is not hazarded at random, but made on an extensive view of the subject. Let what is said be duly weighed, that in a voluntary congregation of four hundred persons, where the Gospel is purely and faithfully preached, there are ordinarily as many true disciples of Christ, and as many instances of conversion, as in a parish of two thousand souls, where the clergyman preaches the same doctrine with equal fidelity and zeal. As for the parish

minister, who labours in a city or populous town (which is the only instance that could be alleged as an objection), his audience is not the parish population; it is a voluntary society, and bears a considerable resemblance to a dissenting congregation. Yet, even here, it will be found, on an average, that the advantage is in favour of the Dissenters. There is an evidence of the comparatively small effect of evangelical preaching in a parish church, which occurs from year to year, when, on the demise of a good clergyman, one of a very different description frequently succeeds; and it is most commonly seen, that the people of the parish attend on him just as they did on his predecessor; and though a few complain, the mass is satisfied. In how many instances is this the case, for one where the people, unable to sit under the new parson, form a society of their own, and choose a preacher to their mind! A few very laudable examples of this kind have occurred, but how few are they in comparison of the others! Yet, of the success of a minister, and of the influence of his doctrine, there can scarcely be a more true barometer. The observation will now apply to Scotland too, where the people in general have been considered as better instructed in the principles of religion.

But a still more striking illustration of the subject appears in the case of the very men concerning whom the question is discussed. The non-conformists, before the Restoration, were parish ministers; and for laborious diligence and zeal, as well as abilities and learning, they had but few superiors. Yet the fruits of these men's ministry appear to have been, in general, comparatively small. When they were silenced, and men

of a very different character were, in most places, appointed to succeed, the number of those who adhered to their old ministers and formed a separate society, was generally far from large. The size of most of the old dissenting meeting-houses, both in London and in the country, furnishes an incontestible proof of this. From these facts, and others of a similar nature which might be adduced, it will be evident that too great a stress has been laid on the circumstance of mere number, without taking into consideration the materials of which that number is composed.

The beneficial effects of the regulations of the New Testament for the government of a Christian society; the closeness and endearments of the relation between the members of it and the pastor of their choice; the importance of maintaining purity of communion, and excluding the ignorant and the wicked from the table of the Lord; and the various modes of advancing religion which arise out of these, are all to be taken into account, by every one who would investigate the subject with impartiality, in all its bearings and in all its extent. And, when every part of it is duly weighed, the pious pastor of a voluntary society of two hundred persons may receive encouragement from the thought, that in his congregation there is a larger portion of divine knowledge, of unfeigned piety, and godly zeal, than in ordinary parishes of ten times the population. When there is a congregation of four, five, or six hundred people voluntarily associating themselves for worship, the minister may consider himself on the level with the good parson of a parish containing two or three thousand souls in a country situation, or in a small

town*. In addition to this, it is to be remembered, that a parish-priest cannot move beyond the circle of his parish, without exposing himself to punishment for the supposed offence. England is the parish of the minister who is not fettered by the canons of an establishment. If he complain that his field of labour is too confined, why does he not widen it, and extend his efforts on every side? There is no canon in the New Testament to forbid him.

To resume the thread of history: a toleration being the only prize which the Dissenters gained, they were duly sensible of its value, received it with lively gratitude, and endeavoured to improve it as an inestimable privilege. Enthusiastically attached to the government, and the order of things, as established by the Revolution, they were justly regarded as amongst the most loyal subjects of the British empire. It is greatly to be lamented, that a spirit of envy and ill-will towards the Dissenters soon manifested itself among the clergy, who were much displeased at the liberty which had been granted them, and seemed disposed, had it been in their power, to snatch it away. Such is the testimony borne by a contemporary writer, who was of their own

* This remark applies, in a great measure, to every institution of the kind. People of no religion in a place are of the established religion, whatever its form may be. If we take out of a parish the absentees from public worship, the *now-and-then* attendants, the grossly ignorant who do not seek instruction, those who go to church from mere custom, without thought or reflection on spiritual things, and those who rest on the mere *opus operatum* as the whole of their duty; and then select those who are concerned about the salvation of their souls, and those who worship God in spirit and in truth, and manifest the reality of their religion by denying themselves, taking up their cross and following Christ, the calculation made above will not appear extravagant, nor unfair.

order. Concerning events which take place at any period, those who live at some distance may be able to form a more accurate judgment; but the spirit of a people, or body of men, and their feelings and tempers on particular occasions, are best delineated by the historian of the times. This advantage was enjoyed by Bishop Burnet, in whose ample narrative this unhappy disposition of his brethren is described*. However, the shield of protection was held over them by the strong hand of government; and the enjoyment of all the comforts of public worship afforded them the sweetest satisfaction. Men who had been long deprived of this benefit, or who had attended at the risk of fine or imprisonment, and who, for their attendance, had often sustained these injuries, had learned to set a proper value on the sanctioned freedom of public worship in the face of day.

While the Dissenters had no great reason to complain of any infraction of the express terms of the Toleration Act, there were different opinions respecting its extent. Various things, they conceived, were implied and supposed, which, though not expressed, must necessarily form a part of its benefits. The clergy, on the other

* "There were two parties among the clergy: one was faithful and firm to the present government; the other expressed a great esteem for jacobites, and in all elections gave their votes to those who leaned that way: at the same time, they showed great resentment against the dissenters, and were enemies to the toleration, and seemed resolved never to consent to any alteration in their favour. The bulk of the clergy ran this way, so that the moderate party was far out-numbered. Profane minds had too great advantage from this, in reflecting severely on a body of men that took oaths, and performed public devotions, when the rest of their lives was too public, and too visible, a contradiction of such oaths and prayers."—Burnet, vol. ii., p. 215.

hand, explained it with greater strictness, and insisted, that what was not plainly expressed, it did not grant. The education of young men for the dissenting ministry was one of these things in which this difference of judgment first appeared. "If we have liberty of worship," said the Dissenters, "we must have ministers to officiate: but these ministers are not immortal: they must die, and we must have others to succeed them. These must receive instructions to qualify them; and academies are necessary for this purpose, and therefore it is plain they must be comprehended in the act. It would otherwise be a repetition of the fable of Tantalus; or of that Turkish policy, by which it is forbidden to Christians to rebuild their places of worship which have fallen into decay." The clergy were of a different mind; not merely the high-flying intolerant members of the hierarchy, but those who were accounted moderate in their sentiments respecting the dissent. In this list, the names of Stillingfleet and Tillotson are found. The former having been promoted to the see of Worcester, his charge to the clergy, in his primary visitation, contains the following words:—"But if, after all, they (the Dissenters) grow more headstrong and insolent by the indulgence which the law gives them, then observe whether they observe those conditions on which the law gives it to them. For these are known rules in law; that he forfeits his privilege who goes beyond the bounds of it; that no privileges are to be extended beyond the bounds which the laws give them, for they ought to be observed as they are given. I leave it to be considered, whether all such who do not observe the

conditions of the indulgences be not as liable to the law as if they had none *." Tillotson's sentiments on the subject may be seen in his answer to Doctor Sharp, the Archbishop of York, who had consulted him respecting Mr. Frankland, an eminent dissenting tutor, who taught university learning within his diocese; and they discover how much men, even the most reasonable, are influenced by situation †.

For the consolation of the Dissenters, the king was more tolerant than his clergy. By his authority, as head of the church, he checked their flaming zeal which blazed in this direction, to the alarm and injury of their fellow-subjects. As long as he lived, he preserved the principles and practice of toleration, notwithstanding the attempts of many malevolent men, who wished for its abridgment or repeal. From the bitterness of

* Stillingfleet's Ecclesiastical Cases, vol. i., p. 51.

Lambeth-house, June 14, 1692.

† "My Lord,

"Yesterday, I received your Grace's letter concerning Mr. Frankland, with the copy of an address to your Grace against him. Yourself are best judge what is fit to be done in the case, because you have the advantage of inquiring into all the circumstances of it. If my advice can signify anything, it can only be to tell your Grace what I would do in it, as the case appears to me at this distance. I would send for him, and tell him, that I would never do anything to infringe the act of toleration: but I did not think his case within it; that there were two things in his case which would hinder me from granting him a licence, though he were, in all things, conformable to the church of England:—first, his setting up a school where a free-school is already established; and then his instructing of young men, in *so public a manner*, in university learning, which is contrary to his oath to do, if he have taken a degree in either of our universities; and, I doubt, contrary to the bishop's oath to grant a licence for the doing of it: so that your Grace does not, in this matter, consider him at all as a Dissenter. This, I only offer to your Grace as what seems to me the fairest and softest way of ridding your hands of this business.

"I remain, my Lord, your Grace's very affectionate brother and servant, J. CANT."—Birch's Life of Archbishop Tillotson, p. 296-7.

party, and the discovery of the want of principle in many from whom better things might have been expected, he led but an uneasy life: the English crown mingled the sharpest thorns with its gems. But he was a great man; his sentiments of religious liberty were liberal and enlarged, beyond the body of the clergy of the establishment, and the mass of the nobility and gentry of the land; and by helping forward the public mind with his example and influence, he contributed, in no small degree, to promote the disgrace of persecution, and to abate, or restrain, the fury of bigotry. The following reign showed his value in this respect, and left regrets in the breasts of Dissenters which were long felt, and a veneration for his memory which remains to the present day.

SECT II.—*State of Religious Liberty during the Reign of Queen Anne.*

WILLIAM was, in the year 1702, succeeded by Anne, the younger daughter of James II. The heads of the Stuarts seem always to have been filled with the prerogatives of the crown. But as the blood of the Clarendon family ran in the veins of Anne, we are not to wonder that she was a favourer of the Tories, and a bigot to the established church. She was married to Prince George of Denmark, a good-natured, easy man, but destitute of the energy of mind necessary to regulate hers. At her accession, she found herself surrounded by a ministry of William's choosing, who had the power

in their hands, and enjoyed the confidence of that part of the nation which approved of the revolution. But the Dissenters soon felt the influence of her accession; for, in the very first year of her reign, a bill was brought into parliament, to abridge their religious liberty, by putting a stop to *occasional conformity*.

An unwise, but a trifling occurrence, in the last reign, had roused the more zealous sons of the church to great indignation. Sir Humphrey Edwin, being a Dissenter, carried, while Lord Mayor of London, the *regalia* of the city to a meeting-house at Pinner's Hall*. This needless act was considered a very heinous crime, and generated as keen wrath in the hearts of many zealous churchmen as ever Achilles felt toward Agamemnon. Such a circumstance, unimportant in itself, kindled the flame of religious contention, and made it blaze to a height which it is now not easy to conceive. It may, however, probably be considered rather as a pretext than as a cause. An occasion of quarrel was sought for, and here it was found. But if we trace the matter to the source, it will be discovered in the dispositions of a considerable number, both of the clergy and of the laity. The second James, by the precipitate measures which he adopted to introduce the Romish faith, completely terrified the English Protestant priesthood, who fancied that they already saw a Popish hierarchy usurping their benefices and their functions. To preserve their station was an object which lay very near their hearts. Feeling the need of the Dissenters, to take their side against Rome, they readily made them the most ample promises, even to a participation

* Calamy, p. 361.

of the loaves and fishes. When the Prince of Orange had chased James and the fears of Popery away, along with the terrors of thousands of the clergy, the goodwill to the Dissenters, which they so warmly felt in the day of their calamity, flew away also; and the Dissenters were thankful to obtain a mere toleration. Of granting this, many of them began to repent. But William's known sentiments, and their influence on public opinion, supported by a body of men of liberal minds and superior talents, among the nobility, gentry, and higher orders in the church, restrained their malevolence, and kept things in a tolerably easy state, during the monarch's life. But, no sooner had Anne ascended the throne, than the clergy roused themselves; and the bill against occasional conformity was the first step towards the abrogation of the Toleration Act. The same gradual method of obtaining an object was pursued by Louis XIII. and XIV. of France, in respect to the edict of Nantes; and their final success, in its entire revocation, was fresh before the eyes of the enemies of religious liberty in England.

With the majority of the clergy, who envied the Dissenters their liberty, a considerable number of the country gentlemen, and many of the nobility, concurred. The influence of an established priesthood over these classes in society, is, at all times, great. A clergyman is usually the pedagogue of their childhood, the tutor of their youth, and the companion of their maturer years; he soothes their solitude, and partakes of their convivial hours. Their ideas, on a variety of subjects, they derive from his early instructions; and, by him, a tone is given to their minds, which mingles itself with all the

sentiments and conduct of future life. By a proper improvement of intercourse with mankind, the effects of this influence may be thrown off; but the generality of them, it follows to the grave. Nor, on this topic, should the influence of the clergy on females, in the superior walks of society, be unnoticed. To estimate the power which the clerical office, a liberal education, a cultivated mind, and elegant manners, must have upon the fair, is not difficult. Their influence, again, on their husbands, and especially on their children, and on their relatives, and on a numerous class of acquaintances and dependants, diffuses the opinions of the clergyman, the prime mover of the whole. In the days of Charles, and James, and William, and Anne, this influence was ten-fold greater than at present.

More enlightened and well-informed men than the generality of the nobility and gentry of Great Britain are at present, were never found in the same walks of life, in any country, or age. But, from the restoration to the accession of the House of Hanover, the state of that class in society was widely different. The change produced by the Restoration, and the dereliction of the former habits of sobriety and application, for the gaiety, dissipation and boisterous mirth which accompanied the returning monarch, had the most unhappy influence on the dispositions and manners of the great. That there were always numerous individuals who shone with distinguished lustre for their intelligence and liberality, is attested by every page of the history of England. But to the mass of country squires, and to many of their superiors, the hares on their fields, and the foxes in their thickets, were the chief objects of

pursuit, abroad; and the kitchen and the cellar furnished the materials of enjoyment, within doors. The cultivation of the mind was no part of their employment*. Over such persons how easy was it for a man of talents and information to acquire a sway! At that time, too, the very office of a clergyman, without regard to personal character, carried with it a degree of weight not easily to be conceived by us, who live when the state of society is so widely different. From a variety of causes, the charm of mere office, both ecclesiastical and civil, is now broken, and character is become of essential importance. It was not so then. Office and character, however, when combined, carried with them almost irresistible force.

Such was the spirit of multitudes of the superior orders of the country, and of a majority of the clergy, when Queen Anne's accession raised their hopes of bringing back the days of Charles II., by stripping Dissenters both of their consequence, and of their legal existence. The first step was to bereave them of every office which they held under government; and, afterwards, of all capacity of being employed in future. Being thus humbled, they could more easily be crushed. That this was the design of the Schism Bill, and of the Bill of Occasional Conformity, which afterwards passed, there is sufficient proof. But there must be a plausible pretext as a cloak to conceal the deformed nakedness of the measure. When Christ is to be condemned to

* For an ample account of the manners of the great in those days, the reader is referred to Addison's Description of the Tory Foxhunter. Chalmer's Preface to the Tatler, and Drake's Essays in the Spectator, &c.

the death of the cross, the chief priests and elders must find him guilty of blasphemy and treason, an enemy both to church and state. When the Dissenters are to be spoiled of the blessings of toleration, some colourable reason must be held out, which will enable a man to look up with confidence, and wear the visage of conscious innocence, nay of meritorious rectitude, while he stands forth and argues in its defence. In the present case, nothing was so easy, nothing so praiseworthy. "The church is in danger," served the purpose admirably well: and the hypocrisy of the Dissenters, who took the sacrament at church, to qualify themselves for civil offices, it was meritorious to expose. If they could, with a safe conscience, take the sacrament sometimes at church, they should be obliged always to take it, or obliged never to take it. By thrusting themselves into public offices, they went beyond the limits of the toleration, and grasped at privileges which it was never the design of the legislature to confer. It was, therefore, full time to put a stop to such practices. But occasional conformity had been practised by the chief men, both ministers and laity, of the Presbyterians, who composed the largest portion of the Dissenters, from the time that the Act of Uniformity passed. That same year there was a meeting of the principal ministers of London, who agreed that they would exercise their ministry as they had opportunity; but that they would continue to attend occasionally the services of the church of England, and communicate at her altars. The Independents, in general, were of a different mind: but this was the common practice of the Presbyterians, both

in town and country, during the severe reigns of Charles and James, when Presbyterians had no worldly benefit to gain by this conduct. Some of them continued it, after the Revolution, and were actually practising it, when the bill to prevent them was introduced, without any regard to the dignities or emoluments of civil office. The venerable names of Baxter, Howe, Bates, and Henry, sanctioned the practice by their approbation and example.

In consequence of these ideas, notwithstanding the Corporation and Test Acts, there were always Dissenters, in corporations and in offices under government, because these acts required them to do nothing but what they had frequently done when in private life. But, while they joined occasionally, they did not choose to confine themselves entirely to the ministrations of the English church. They preferred the dissenting mode of worship and government, as well as the ministry of the Nonconformists; and with them fixed their stated communion, as members of the churches which they had formed. When the Revolution enabled the Dissenters to erect places of worship, and to hold their assemblies in public, the persons who attended them were more easily observed and known. It is possible that a greater number were admitted to civic honours and public offices, by which the jealousy was increased.

But, while the clergy grudged the Dissenters their hearers, and the more narrow-minded members of the church of England wished to engross all the honours and emoluments of the country to themselves, there was an additional reason for the introduction of the

bill. The Dissenters, as a body, were highly respectable for talents, character, and influence; and the political party, into which they threw their weight, derived from them a considerable accession of strength. No religious body should become the adherents of any political party or division in the state, and attach themselves solely to it. But, while they study to excel in every social virtue, and to be exemplary in their obedience to the laws of the community, they should, in the exercise of their rights, as burgesses, or electors, act as individuals, and never as a body; and every one ought to judge for himself, and give his vote in favour of those whom he conceives best qualified to promote the public good. Such happily is the case, at present, among the Dissenters. Had they always acted in this manner, evils might perhaps have been avoided, which threatened them with utter ruin. If there be any instance in which they may appear publicly as a body, it is in a case which respects religion and morals, and in relation to principles so generally acknowledged by good men of every denomination, that they may have the judgment and conscience of all pious people on their side. To act as a body in such a case, would have considerable effect on the rulers of the country; for it would be acknowledged to be an exertion in its proper place, and not designed to promote the purposes of a faction, or to embarrass the government.

The first Dissenters may be thought to have acted too much as a political party in the state, and to have cast all their influence into one scale. But their conduct must not be condemned with severity; and due allowance must be made for the peculiarity of their

situation. The Whigs of those days were their friends; they had procured for them the act of toleration; they supported them against their enemies; and relieved them from a multitude of petty vexations with which they were teased. From the Tories, on the other hand, they received nothing but contempt and asperity, with insult and injury, and a determined hostility to their very existence. It will not, then, excite surprise, that they felt the warmest friendship for the Whigs, and did every thing that was possible to strengthen their cause. It seems, indeed, like an act of self-preservation, which it would require the self-denial of an angel not to have performed. But it enraged the Tories; and the bill against occasional conformity was the first step towards their full revenge.

A new parliament had been chosen, soon after the queen's accession, and it partook of her spirit, in a much greater measure than the last. Into the lower house the infidel St. John, the arch-champion of the Tory party, with the aid of Bromley and Annesly, introduced the bill, on the 4th of November, in the year 1702. The preamble expressed a sincere regard for the act of toleration, and a determination to preserve it untouched. The Spanish inquisition professes the most ardent affection for the persons whom they torture, and a zealous concern for their happiness. The bill purposed to enact, that if any person, in an office under government, or in a corporation, after taking the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England, should, during the time of his being in office, worship in any meeting-house, or in any house where there are more than five besides the family, he should forfeit a

hundred pounds for the offence, and five pounds a day afterwards, while he continued in office, to be received by the informer, and recovered in the most summary manner. Afterwards, if, during a twelvemonth, he was not guilty of the crime of entering a meeting-house, but conformed fully to the church of England, and received the sacrament three times in the course of the year, he again became capable of holding offices. But, if he relapsed into an attendance on dissenting worship, the sinner was to forfeit double the fore-mentioned penalties, and forfeit his office, or employment; and not be again capable of holding one, till he had conformed for the space of three years, whereof oath was to be made in writing*.

To prepare the public mind for the reception of the bill, many sermons on high church Tory principles were preached, and many bitter pamphlets against the Dissenters were circulated, which poured forth all the gall of party malice. To these were added abusive and virulent speeches in the lower house. So successful were the efforts, that the bill passed the Commons with a great majority in its favour; and, in the beginning of December, was sent up to the Lords. There every nerve was strained to carry it, and so little regard was paid to decency and consistency, that Prince George of Denmark, the husband of the queen, a Lutheran by profession, who usually worshipped in a Lutheran chapel, and consequently was a dissenter from the Established church, after taking the test, came into the house and voted for the bill. Men in high stations are not always wise.

* Calamy, p. 624-6.

The Lords did not object to the principles of the bill, but, being more dispassionate than the Commons, they proposed several alterations. They denied what the Commons had asserted, that every person to be admitted to any office or employment was, by law, obliged to be entirely conformable to the Established church, or that this was the intention of the law, when it provided, that every person to be admitted to offices, should receive the sacrament, according to the rites and usages of the church of England. They lowered the penalty from a hundred pounds to twenty; one-third to go to the queen, a second to the poor, and the other to the informer. They left out the five pounds a day, and all the latter part of the bill which respected future incapacity for office. They added several clauses of a mitigating nature*.

Eager to obtain their object, the Commons proposed a free conference with the Lords. Managers were chosen by both houses, and they argued the subject with great ability and spirit. But the efforts of the Commons were, for this time, in vain. They left the bill with the Lords, expressing their hopes that they would not allow the nation to lose the benefit of so good a law. But the Lords adhered to their amendments, and the Commons refusing to adopt them, the bill was lost†.

Bitter was the distress of the Dissenters when they saw their moderate privileges envied by those in power; and the Court and the Commons combined against

* Calamy, pp. 627, 634.

† On three several clauses, *to adhere*, was carried by a single vote, and each time by a different peer. Burnet, vol. ii. A majority of the bishops was against the bill.

them. The joy of their deliverance was proportionably sweet. It is the way of the great sovereign of the church thus to exercise the faith and love, the dependence and submission of his disciples; and they receive much spiritual benefit from his dispensations. Their hearts are raised above reliance on man; and they look to God for help. He was, at this time, pleased to grant it: they saw his hand in their deliverance, and gave him the praise. But the wrath of their enemies, far from being assuaged, was more inflamed by the repulse: and they waited with eager impatience for another opportunity of attempting the accomplishment of the object. The Dissenters, therefore, were not permitted long to enjoy the consoling thought that the storm was blown over. For no sooner did the parliament meet again, in the beginning of November, than the bill was introduced, a second time, into the lower house. To disarm, if possible, the opposition of the Lords, it was altered in several of its parts. Instead of five; ten, besides the family, were necessary to form a conventicle. The penalty of a hundred pounds was reduced to fifty; and the fine of five pounds a day, while the person continued in office, was left out. After considerable debates, it was carried by a great majority, and sent up to the peers. During the recess of parliament, the court had changed its mind; and many of those who voted in favour of the bill now absented themselves from the house. On the motion for the second reading of the bill, it was rejected by a majority of twelve. The bishops were divided on the question; but two more were against the bill than for

it. Bishop Burnet signalized himself by his zeal for its rejection.

Though twice repulsed, the Tories were not discouraged; but, in the beginning of the next session of parliament, which met in October, in the year 1704, they introduced the bill, a third time, in a form not materially different from the preceding year. In order to insure success, it was proposed to tack it to a money-bill; because a bill of that description the Lords are not permitted to alter. This was negatived by a considerable majority; but it was carried, as a distinct bill, and sent up to the Lords. The queen went to the upper house, to hear the debates, which were enlarged, on purpose to make her fully acquainted with the subject. On a division, it was carried against the second reading, by a majority of twenty-one. Thus, through the good providence of God, the designs of the enemies of the Dissenters, and of religious liberty, were again defeated; and in this state matters continued for several years*.

From the time of the Revolution, the Dissenters had suffered those inconveniences, which persons in their situation will always feel, when public opinion lags behind the spirit of the law. Even during William's reign there was frequent cause of complaint; violent clergymen bore hard upon them; harsh and unreasonable justices of the peace were backward to render the protection to which they were entitled; and individuals, whose hearts overflowed with malicious bigotry, or petty mobs, stirred up by their activity, were guilty of

* Calamy, p. 711, 12.

acts of lawless violence. But government was always ready to give redress; and its known good-will to the non-conformists checked many an evil-doer, and constrained him to throw away the weapons of his enmity. The death of William was the signal for attack, and as soon as the event was known at Newcastle-under-Line, the mob assembled and demolished the dissenting meeting-house. Anne was known to be of a different spirit from her predecessor; and greater liberties, it was thought, might be taken without incurring danger or displeasure. Still, however, the substantial benefits of the toleration were maintained, and continued to be enjoyed, for five years after the third rejection of the occasional-conformity bill.

While, from the slumbers of their enemies, the minds of the Dissenters were calmed into security, an event occurred, which their wisdom could neither foresee nor prevent; and which, without any fault of theirs, exposed them to many injuries, and introduced a system of the most determined hostility, which, by repeated acts, brought them to the brink of ruin. The instrument of God and man, in this mournful dispensation, was Henry Sacheverell, D.D. chaplain of St. Saviour's, in Southwark. His grandfather, John, of St. John's College, Oxford, minister at Wincanton, in the days of Presbytery, was ejected from his living by the Act of Uniformity. Being afterwards seized at a conventicle, he was imprisoned for three years, and the hardships of his tedious confinement brought him to his grave. His eldest son, differing in sentiments from his father, was the clergyman of St. Peter's church in Marlborough,

and died in the midst of his days, leaving a numerous family in indigent circumstances. Henry was adopted by an apothecary in the town, who having been his godfather, gave him a classical education, and afterwards sent him to Oxford, to Magdalen College.

By nature, Henry Sacheverell appears to have been endowed with those peculiar qualities, which fitted him for the champion of the high-church party. The Whig writers speak of him with uncommon severity, and place him exceedingly low, both in talents and in virtues. Let due allowance be made for the bitterness of party zeal. But by his friends, he is not much exalted in either of these respects. His excellencies were of another kind. He had a fine person, a melodious voice, and a most graceful and impressive delivery. The fire of zeal for the Church of England, in her most extravagant claims of dominion, burned in him hot as Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. His system not only allowed, but enjoined it as one of the first of duties, to hate all who were without her pale, so as to employ every opprobrious epithet to express his hatred; and he seems to have been at pains to form a collection of them, for sermons on the 5th of November and 30th of January. The opposite party considered him as a hypocrite, and insisted that his zeal was only to advance his interest; and that the cry of the danger of the church was nothing else than the ladder by which he might climb to preferment. But there is no satisfactory evidence that this was really the case: it is far from being improbable that the man was really sincere.

In order to be, or to seem to be a Puritan, there must be the appearance of superior sanctity, and a pe-

culiar purity, and even severity of manners; but these are by no means necessary to constitute a high-church champion. Let there be a loud cry that "the church is in danger," and abundance of heat and fury against sectaries and fanatics, and nothing more is needful. In life and conversation, he may be no better than his neighbours: two or three of the ordinary vices of human nature will, by no means, injure him in the esteem of his constituents. Such being the system which satisfies his conscience, and even appears meritorious in his eyes, his virtues and vices accord with his mistaken sentiments*.

An overweening conceit appears to have been born with him. Arrogance, self-sufficiency, a contempt and hatred of all who did not accord with his views, marked his character, and were developed in his conduct. When he applied for ordination to Dr. Lloyd, who was then in the see of Oxford, his false latinity called forth correction; but in opposition to the learned prelate, he insisted that he was right. So ignorant was he of theology, that ordination was refused to him, for a

* A Neapolitan shepherd came in anguish to his priest: "Father, have mercy on a miserable sinner. It is the holy season of Lent; and while I was busy at work, some whey spurting from the cheese-press flew into my mouth, and, wretched man! I swallowed it: free my distressed conscience from its agonies, by absolving me from my guilt." "Have you no other sins to confess," said his spiritual guide. "No, I do not know that I have committed any other." "There are," said the priest, "many robberies and murders, from time to time, committed on your mountains; and I have reason to believe that you are one of the persons concerned in them." "Yes," he replied, "I am; but these are never accounted a crime; it is a thing practised by us all, and there needs no confession on that account." The man was as sincere in his religion as any inhabitant of the kingdom of Naples; but both his judgment and his heart were led astray by a false and dangerous system. Sacheverell, whose soul was cast in a similar mould, like him, erred in his ideas of sin and duty.

season, on that account. It was afterwards granted; and he was appointed to a small living in Staffordshire, where his peculiar cast of mind soon appeared. His restless soul was agitated day and night, and his fury could not be restrained within his breast, but must have vent. He found an object of attack. He reproached the memory of King William; he condemned the Revolution; he was furious against the Whig administration; he used, in these attacks, the most severe expressions, and seemed to court notice by provoking suffering. High-church was his peerless *Dulcinea del Toboso*, to whom our knight-errant had sworn inviolable devotion; and, like his prototype of Salamanca, he sallied forth in quest of adventures.

Oxford was, on different occasions, the theatre of his prowess, which he exhibited there before a multitude of congenial souls. Growing bold by approbation, he appeared as preacher of an assize sermon at Derby, "On the communication of sin," which procured him an increased measure of public notice. The adherents of the Tory party in London hearing of his fame, called him up to be the champion of the metropolis. At St. Paul's, on the 5th of November, in the year 1709, he delivered, before the lord mayor and aldermen, a discourse on 2 Cor. xi. 27, which he entitled, "The Perils of False Brethren in Church and State." Sir Samuel Garrard, who was the chief magistrate that year, expressed his warmest approbation of the sermon; but when he proposed to the aldermen to request that it should be printed, they refused their consent. Sacheverell, however, published it, with a very flattering dedication to

the lord mayor, and so eagerly was it sought after, that forty thousand copies were sold in the space of a few weeks. By the Tories it was extolled to the skies, as a performance which proclaimed its author to be worthy of a bishopric; the Whigs thought the sermon entitled to flames worse than the hands of men could kindle, and the person who wrote it worthy of the severest punishment*.

At this distance of time, it is difficult to find, in Dr. Sacheverell's sermon, just reason for the praise of the one side, or the condemnation of the other. Different kinds of rant are to be met with in public speakers; and Sacheverell's sermon was a specimen of high-church rant. There must have been a peculiar predisposition in the Tories, when this sermon could rouse and charm them: and on the other hand, there is nothing so remarkably pointed, that any of the Whigs needed to apply it to themselves, or be enraged at the author. As to what he said against Dissenters, that was meekly to be borne. Thousands of sermons preached on the 30th of January have been equally severe; and he is unworthy of the name of a Dissenter, who cannot read such a performance with patience and with pity. The church Whigs had still less cause of displeasure, and were extremely reprehensible for their irritability. Let the reader represent to himself a man, whose ideas of priestly dignity and power were little inferior to those of the Church of Rome; who was displeased that people of a different communion should enjoy toleration, because he conceived that his own church should fill the land; who was provoked almost to madness to see

* Sacheverell's Sermon at St. Paul's.

every subject, theological and ecclesiastical, discussed with freedom in books daily issuing from the press; and he has before his eyes the picture of Henry Sacheverell, D.D. chaplain of St. Saviour's, Southwark. If left to himself by rulers in church and state, a very harmless animal he is to others, though he may be exceedingly troublesome to himself.

What to do with the author of the obnoxious sermon became, unhappily, the subject of deliberation with the ministry. Lord Somers, it is said, advised that he should be prosecuted for the offence in a court of law. There is an unwillingness to punish, which governments should display in everything of this kind: it is necessary to the dignity of their character, and conduces to the safety of the state. An eagerness to catch at every bitter and hasty expression uttered against them, in a moment of irritation and wrath, betrays a littleness, as well as severity of mind, and discovers apprehensions of danger, unworthy of men who should be amply furnished with firmness and courage. The advice of Somers, though certainly strong enough, was overruled by his colleagues, who conceived that Sacheverell had pointed at them as by name; and they unwisely determined to bring the matter before parliament, and, in a solemn manner, establish his guilt, and award an exemplary punishment. Had they given him a fat living, or a bishopric, the danger of the church would, most probably, have vanished from his eyes, and he would have, ever afterwards, been as quiet as a lamb, and as gentle as a dove.

Into parliament the cause was brought by Mr. Dolben, son of the former Archbishop of York, and

heavy complaints were made of the chaplain of St. Saviour's. So strangely were their minds heated with the subject, and with so high a hand were things carried, that it was determined to impeach him, as guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors. A committee, consisting of some of the first characters in the house, for talents and respectability, was appointed to draw up articles of impeachment from the sermon. They were prepared, approved, and carried up to the lords, who acceded to them, and directed preparations to be made for the trial. Four heavy charges were brought against the doctor. He was accused of asserting, that the means used for bringing about the revolution were unjustifiable ; that the toleration granted by law to Dissenters was unwarrantable ; that the Church of England was in imminent danger under the present government ; and that the measures of the existing administration tended to the destruction of the constitution. In order to conduct the affair with greater solemnity and publicity, Westminster Hall was ordered to be fitted up for the purpose.

From various causes, much time was consumed before the trial could commence ; and all that time, Sacheverell and his friends were most assiduously employed in rousing the public mind against the ministry and the Whigs, and in endeavouring to persuade the public that they had formed a determination to pull down the church, and set up the sectaries ; and that this was the first step towards the accomplishment of their design. Nor were his friends now either few or inconsiderable. The high-church party among the clergy, which formed a considerable majority of the inferior orders of the hierarchy, favoured his views. The whole body of the

Tories also ranged themselves under his banners. Some of them, from the heart, entered into all Sacheverell's views, while others felt nothing of cordial attachment to the man, but hoped that, by professing zeal for the safety and prosperity of the church, they might be enabled to drive out the Whig administration, and govern in their place. As it had been a disappointment to them, that the reins of authority had not been put into their hands, at the queen's accession, they were now the more anxious and alert to improve the present opportunity. So well did these men perform their parts, especially by the assistance of the clergy, in discourses from the pulpit, that the minds of the multitude were wrought up almost to frenzy.

The Whigs perceived their error too late; and before the trial commenced, they were sensible that they had brought themselves into a situation of the most imminent danger. How to mitigate the evil, and, if possible, render it productive of benefit to themselves and to their cause, became now the subject of deliberation: and it was resolved to bring forward all the great principles of the revolution, and of liberty; and, by contending for these, to interest the public in their favour. But it was in vain: a passion for liberty was unable to contend with the passion for the church.

On the 27th of February, 1710, the trial began, and was managed, on the part of the Commons, with singular ability, by Sir Joseph Jekyll, Mr. Eyre, General Stanhope, Sir Peter King, and, above all, by Sir Thomas Parker, who entered with his whole soul into the business, and brought his superior talents to bear upon Sacheverell, and the sentiments which he had

maintained. To enter into a particular relation of the proceedings of the court does not coincide with the plan of this work, and would occupy too much room. An ample narrative is given in the histories of the times, and especially in an account of the trial, to which the reader is referred*.

When the managers of the Commons had brought forward their accusations, in support of which they entered into an elaborate defence of the principles of civil and religious liberty, of the revolution, and of the dissent, Sir Simon Harcourt, and the other advocates for Sacheverell, appeared in his defence. With much ingenuity and judgment, they eluded the force of the arguments which his accusers had adduced, by allowing their truth, and acknowledging their weight. Instead of saying anything against the revolution, the toleration, or her Majesty's ministers, they only insisted that the doctor did not speak against these, and that his words conveyed another meaning, and they justified the discourses, as inculcating general duties, without descending to notice particular exceptions. After his council had concluded the defence, he himself read a well-composed vindication of his conduct, which had been drawn up by Atterbury, Smalbridge, Friend, and Moss, and corrected by Sir Simon Harcourt. It was uttered with all that boldness and confidence which nature had so abundantly bestowed upon him. He asserted, that he had always spoken respectfully of the revolution, of King William, of the Protestant succession, and of the queen and her government. He, however, strenu-

* Burnet, vol. ii. Tindal's Continuation of Rapin, vol. xxiii. Somerville's History of the Reign of Queen Anne.

ously asserted the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, as being the doctrine of the church in which he was brought up, and at whose altars he had the honour to officiate. He concluded with many pathetic expressions, designed to move the audience to compassion, and with the most solemn asseverations of his innocence, in the sight of that God who searcheth the hearts of the children of men. This, say the contemporary writers of the Whig party, while it excited the multitude to pity, filled with inexpressible horror those who knew the man, and his ordinary conversation. Many, who took no part in the business, were astonished at solemn declarations so contrary to the doctor's avowed sentiments; and were, beyond measure, shocked at his hypocrisy*. After a full investigation of the business by the Lords, for the space of three weeks, he was found guilty of the charges brought against him, by a majority of seventeen voices. Their sentence was, that his sermons, at Derby and St. Paul's, should be publicly burnt by the hands of the hangman; and, along with them, the decree of the university of Oxford, in the year 1683. He himself was prohibited from preaching for the space of three years.

During the time of the trial, the doctor, who had two of the chief men of Oxford for his bail, lodged in the Temple, and went every day to Westminster in a coach, attended by an immense assemblage of people, who strove to kiss his hand, and paid him the lowliest obeisance. Those of a superior rank, from their windows and balconies, gave him demonstrations of attachment and respect. So zealous were his adherents for the

* Burnet, vol. ii. Tindal, vol. xxiii., p. 341.

glory of their idol, that they compelled every passenger to do him honour, and to shout the watch-word of the party, "The Church and Sacheverell." Members of parliament were reduced to the same necessity. The queen's sedan was surrounded by the mob in her way to the House of Lords, who, to impress her with their sentiments, cried, "God bless your Majesty and the church! we hope your Majesty is for Dr. Sacheverell*."

The next step was to vent their fury against those whom they considered as enemies of that church of which Dr. Sacheverell was the champion. The houses of the managers, of the Bishop of Salisbury, and of some of the most zealous of the peers, were threatened with destruction. They vowed vengeance against the house and church of Dr. Hoadley, a celebrated low-churchman, who, in several discourses on public occasions, and in other writings, had strenuously defended the principles of whiggism and the revolution.

But their heaviest wrath fell on the Dissenters, who had taken no active part in the matter. These heroes for high-church, like their brethren in other ages, united zeal and robbery together; for they plundered the houses of several private members of that body; and though they abhorred their faith, had no objection to a share of their goods. But their places of worship felt the heaviest weight of the vengeance of the mob. They began with Daniel Burgess's meeting-house, in Cary Street, and having torn down the pulpit and the pews,

* The speeches delivered in the course of the trial, and, indeed, the whole proceedings, are contained in a duodecimo volume, entitled, "A complete History of the Affair of Dr. Sacheverell." Printed, in London, 1711.

committed them to the flames, in Lincoln's-Inn Fields, crying out, after the example of their brethren at Ephesus, "High Church and Sacheverell." Mr. Earle's meeting-house, in Long Acre; Mr. Taylor's, in Leather Lane; Mr. Bradbury's, in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street; Mr. Wright's, in Blackfriars; and Mr. Hamilton's, in Clerkenwell, shared the same fate. Threatenings were uttered against many others, which would, no doubt, have been put into execution, but for the stop which was soon put to their lawless violence. Nor was it the rabble alone which was concerned in such excesses: according to Whig testimony, they acted under the influence of men of elevated rank, who were seen directing their operations, and encouraging them by approbation and reward. But they were checked in the midst of their labours. By the spirited exertions of the queen's guards, the mob was dispersed, and quiet restored; and such precautions were taken, as insured tranquillity during the remainder of the trial*.

In the course of this remarkable business, Sacheverell was surrounded by the clergy, most of whom espoused his cause; and the queen's own chaplains stood about him as his friends. The heads of the Tory party were his patrons, caressed those of his brethren who were the warmest in his cause, and by their elegant hospitalities animated them to still greater exertions in his favour. The doctor himself displayed his appropriate character. Not an inch of the self-sufficiency and arrogance which had hitherto accompanied him in his progress did he lose in Westminster-hall.

* Calamy, p. 721. Burnet, vol. ii., p. 542. Tindal, vol. xxiii., pp. 343 and 344.

He scowled on his accusers with contempt and disdain. In consulting with his friends, he betrayed that arrogance of conceit, and petulant assurance of infallibility, which rendered it difficult for them to conceal their disgust and chagrin. The acclamations of the multitude he received with an air of haughtiness, blended with self-complacency, as an honour scarcely adequate to his merits. It is said too, and may be easily believed, that he set himself up in all companies as an oracle ; whose decisions must neither be contradicted nor called in question. The man little thought, that, instead of being the head of the party, he was but its tool*.

The decision of the Lords certainly furnished just matter of triumph to Sacheverell and the Tories ; for supposing him to be really guilty, how small must the offence be, which three years abstinence from preaching was sufficient to expiate ! He was everywhere received by his friends with extasies of joy. Bonfires and illuminations testified the exultations of his adherents ; and those who would not join in these demonstrations of gladness, suffered for their firmness. The flame spread through every part of the country, and the Dissenters unhappily found ridicule and reproach to be the lowest kinds of suffering. Their personal safety was in many places endangered, their houses were injured, and their places of worship threatened, mutilated, and destroyed†.

* Burnet, vol. ii. Tindal.

† At Exeter, Sherbourne, Cirencester, Oxford, Gloucester, and Pomfret, and other places, the meeting-houses and the habitations of the Dissenters felt the effects of their wrath. One of their places of worship at Bristol was pulled down, and the materials cast into the river. Zealous church people had their children christened by the name of Sacheverell,

Sacheverell's journey into Wales, some months after, to take possession of a living, displayed the height to which party spirit was raised, and proved an additional source of uneasiness to the Dissenters. In the places through which he passed, he was received with little less than regal splendour. Hundreds, and, in some parts of the country, thousands of men in arms attended him from town to town. The clergy paid their homage to him with the most endearing cordiality, as the champion of the church, and of their order. Magistrates in all the insignia of office, received him into their precincts, while the Tory nobility and gentry welcomed him to their seats, and treated their guest with the most distinguished honours. Wherever these demonstrations of attachment were displayed, there appeared, at the same time, a spirit of hatred and revenge against the enemies of the church. In this unhappy predicament the Dissenters were always considered; and their persons, their families, their habitations, and above all, their meeting-houses, were exposed to the most serious injuries, and suffered the wanton fury of unfeeling men, who were intoxicated by drinking, to the very dregs, the full cup of high-church fanaticism. The sting left in the soul by such treatment remains longer, and is productive of more pernicious consequences to the peace and welfare of a country, than superficial observers can conceive.

How insignificant a circumstance will sometimes set a whole nation in a flame, especially when the skill and some of them on their death-bed, said to their ministers, "You can do us no good, but if Dr. Sacheverell were here, he could save us."—History of Sacheverell, p. 380.

and strength of the clergy are exerted in the matter ! The ignorance of the mass of the labouring people, and of many of those above them, was deplorably great. Ignorance is the fruitful mother of bigotry and false zeal ; and the cause of that religion which can be promoted by blasphemy, drunkenness, and debauchery, could not have found more able champions, whose ardour increased with their intoxication and excesses, and who, in proportion as they grew more wicked, became more devout in their way*.

* To the ignorance of the mass of the people, which rendered them the easy prey of a religious demagogue, a failure of the preceding harvest gave an additional stimulus. Provisions were remarkably dear. The labouring classes were very much straitened, and doubtless the long continuance of the war, which was justly become unpopular, tended to sour their minds, and to prepare them for a public manifestation of their discontent. This ill-humour was heightened by a circumstance which brought great odium on the ministry, though no blame could be justly attached to their conduct. In the preceding year, a considerable number of Germans, driven from the Palatinate, their native soil, by distress, sought refuge in England, which, greatly to its honour, has often been the asylum of the miserable. These were entertained, both by the public, and by individuals, with great benevolence and compassion. That the country should be sensibly injured by acts of hospitality to a few thousand strangers is absurdity itself. But the labouring people thought so ; and finding provisions dear, they fancied that an encampment of Palatines in the vicinity of the metropolis was the cause. As they were fed at the public expense, the ministers of state were the authors of the sufferings of the poor English. Their displeasure was heightened by another consideration,—these poor people were not of the church of England, and it was an aggravation of the crime to take its children's bread, and give it to foreign Presbyterian dogs. These causes of discontent were fomented by the industry of the Tories, who asked, if they did not see that it was the design of the Whig administration, by introducing, and afterwards naturalizing so many foreign Protestants, to increase the number of Dissenters, and thus, first weaken, and afterwards overthrow the established church. Such politicians as the labouring people of that day were better qualified to believe than to reason ; and by the heartiness of a belief, which was not without its corresponding works, they were prepared to advocate the cause of Sacheverell, in all those ways which zeal of heart and violence of hands required. The Londoners gave the tone to the minds of their brethren in the country.

The sufferings of the Dissenters, by lawless mobs, were but the beginning of sorrows. It was the object of the Tories to crush them entirely, and such would have been the effect, as it was the design of Sacheverell's triumph, had not death been their friend, and by one stroke of his hand frustrated all the purposes, and all the wishes of their enemies.

Queen Anne regularly attended Dr. Sacheverell's trial. Her heart, from nature and education, was with the Tories. Circumstances, however, had hitherto kept her in the hands of the Whigs, who are accused of not having treated her with all the respect which was due. But the timidity of her natural disposition, and the fear of evils from a change, had hitherto detained her in their power. Their arguments on the trial were not much calculated to gratify her taste. To be told that she derived her authority from the people, that her best title to the crown depended on acts of parliament, and that, in case of oppression, subjects might resist, and dethrone the tyrant, were political dogmas which it required a far stronger mind than Anne's to approve. This shocked all the Tory feelings of a frame in which the blood of the Stewarts flowed with so strong a tide. On the other hand, the assertions of Sacheverell and his adherents, that rulers derive their power from God, and are accountable to him alone, and that resistance in any case, to their authority, is a damnable sin, must have been sweeter to her taste than honey from the comb. The marked attachment which so large a portion of the people showed for the supporters of these opinions, and the odium which fell so heavily on the Whigs, emboldened the queen to shake

off that party, under whose direction she had hitherto acted, and to throw herself into the arms of the Tories*.

A step so bold, and so important, could not be taken without a new parliament. This measure was considerably facilitated by that tone which the trial of Sacheverell gave to the public mind. The clergy heightened the effect by their discourses; and while preparations were made for the dissolution, they strenuously recommended from the pulpit, and in their private intercourse with their parishioners, candidates who were zealous for Dr. Sacheverell and their church†. Such is the testimony borne by Bishop Burnet, whose office and situation enabled him to judge. A Tory ministry, and a Tory House of Commons, were Sacheverell's bequest to his country. The value of the legacy, with respect to the Dissenters, will be seen in

* The soul of Anne was cast in the same mould as her father's. They thought and felt alike; but the object of their idolatry was different: James's was the church of Rome, Anne's the church of England. Exceedingly limited in her capacities, she seemed framed for being the seat of a bigoted attachment to her religious system; and this disposition was cherished under the tuition of Compton, Bishop of London. Finding a mind adapted to his purpose, he crammed it full of those narrow principles which are not unbecoming a monk in his cell, but are inconceivably pernicious to a sovereign on the throne. A nation which commits the education of the heir-apparent of the crown to a bigot for a religious sect, is sowing hemlock, to poison the next generation, and is planting woe for them to reap. A wrong bias given to the youthful mind, may retard or prevent the happiness of millions; and may keep alive the flame of religious animosity among different sects, so as considerably to diminish the strength and endanger the safety of the country. The same pupil, under the fostering care of a Tillotson, or a Burnet, by acquiring from the dignified tutor an enlarged mind, and a liberal heart, would have treated all with kindness, and united all in the bonds, at least, of forbearance and affection, of harmony and peace.

† Such a spirit of violence prevailed through all the country, that thousands of Whigs, from a regard to personal safety, durst not exercise their right of election; and many, who did, suffered severely for their boldness. Burnet, vol. ii., p. 554.

the following pages; and their power will be found to have been exercised with as little honour to their country, as tenderness to the Dissenting body. Harley, St. John, Harcourt, and others of the same spirit, now filled the chief offices of state, and had the sole direction of public affairs.

The first thing, under their administration, which affected the Dissenters, was the introduction of the old bill against occasional conformity. For seven years it had slept, but, from the complexion of the times, fears were entertained that it would awake again; and these fears were increased by the political changes that took place in consequence of Sacheverell's triumph, which brought their enemies into power. Nor were they vain; for though the business was not immediately taken up, it was not lost sight of; and, on the 15th of December, in the year 1711, the Earl of Nottingham, a zealous supporter of the church, who had lately gone over to the Whigs, brought into the House of Lords a bill which embraced the object for which the Tories had been so long earnestly struggling. It was entitled "An Act for Preserving the Protestant Religion, by better securing the Church of England, and for confirming the toleration granted to Protestant Dissenters by an act for supplying the defects thereof." From a lord, whose word of honour, on account of the superior dignity of nobility, is equal to another man's oath, who would expect to find that in a bill with such a title, it was proposed to be enacted, "if any person who filled an office or place of trust and profit under Government, and Common Councilmen in Corporations, who should

be present at any meeting for divine worship, where there were more than ten persons besides the family, in which the liturgy was not used, should, upon conviction, forfeit the said office and place of trust and profit; and continue incapable of enjoying any such situation, till he should be able to make oath, that he had not been present at any conventicle during a whole year, and in that time had, at least thrice, received the Lord's Supper according to the rites and usage of the Church of England?"

That the Tories, who had never concealed their enmity to Dissenters, should introduce such a bill, was naturally to be expected. It was the boon which they had promised to the high church zealots for their support. It was looked for in the preceding year, and as one whole session had been allowed to glide away without the measure being brought forward by the new ministry, they complained loudly of the tardiness of their friends. At last, to their astonishment, a peer, who had abandoned the Tories, and gone over to the Whigs, brings forward the devoted sheep to the altar, as if the sweet savour from the sacrifice of the Dissenters' privileges was to be the reward of his apostacy. The Whig lords felt a parental fondness for their convert, and almost unanimously supported the bill; so that the Tories found it difficult to come in for any share of the credit of a measure for which they had, thrice before, laboured in vain, and in which they had been opposed by a majority of peers, both spiritual and temporal, with success. How changed are their sentiments now, concerning the subject of religious liberty, while the cause remains precisely the same! When

men act on expedients, and not from principles, nothing can be looked for but inconsistencies which degrade themselves, and plunge into ruin those who have the unhappiness to place dependence on them. By one such step public men lose their character, and with it their influence on the most virtuous part of society, and are ever afterwards viewed with suspicion by those who were before most strongly attached. "I came to you alone," said Nottingham, "but if I be successful in this affair, others will follow me." The Whig lords sighed for their former honours; and in order to gratify those who might have it in their power to render them assistance, they let the vengeance of the Tories fall on the Dissenters, and even stretched out their hands to help them to inflict the blow.

In three short days, the bill passed the Lords, and was transmitted to the Commons, who, in as short a time, returned it, with the addition of a penalty of forty pounds on conviction of the offence of being at a conventicle, to be paid to the informer. Not to reprobate unprincipled conduct, and the wanton sacrifice of virtuous maxims to the hope of advancing political interests, especially when such conduct appears in the highest ranks of society, both in church and state, would be to abandon the cause both of God and man*. With what

* Bishop Burnet, who was very zealous against the bill in the earlier part of this reign, and who takes a great deal of credit to himself for his opposition, and that of a majority of the bishops, relates the last agitation of the subject very briefly, and with a great deal of *sang froid*. How much tranquillity of mind, and philosophical calmness men display, when only their neighbour's interests are at stake. He concludes his account thus: "all the excuse that the Whigs made for their easiness in this matter, was that they gave way to it, to try how far the yielding it might go towards quieting the fears of those who seemed to think the church was still in danger till the act passed; and thereby to engage them to

calmness do they ruin thousands of respectable families, and wring the hearts of multitudes with all the bitterness of the most poignant distress. From the Revolution, great numbers of Dissenters, conceiving themselves secured by the pledge of the English legislature in the Toleration Act, entered into offices under government, were extensively employed, had acquired the habits of their station, and were unqualified for obtaining support in any other way. To ruin them all, both Whigs and Tories join.

The French and Dutch Protestants petitioned to be heard against the bill, and to be exempted from its effects; but no attention was paid to their request. Application was made by the Dissenters to Harley, the treasurer, whose family was chiefly among the Presbyterians, and who himself had lived in communion with them during the greater part of his life. But it was of no avail. While indignation is roused at the view of tyranny by the side of the throne, political wisdom must condemn the narrow-minded policy which deprives the community of the services of any one class of the people, and prevents men of superior talents, of tried integrity, and of extensive influence from bringing all these into action for the public benefit. Is it not remarkable, that those who have argued most strenuously for the doctrine of restrictions, and have been almost petrified at the idea of persons of a religion different from their own being admitted to public offices, have never expressed any fears of danger from the

concur with them in those important matters which might come before them. It must be left for time to shew what good effect this act may have on the church, or what bad ones it may have on Dissenters."—Vol. ii., pp. 585, 586. *Surely men of high degree are a lie.*—Ps. lxii. 9.

admission of men who have no religion at all? Yet surely those who have no religious principles to urge them to duty, and restrain them from evil, must be the most injurious to the community, and may justly be considered as persons of whom every good man should entertain the greatest dread.

The degradation which the Dissenters suffered from the bill, must have been felt by them all as the grossest insult; and as a flagrant injustice to the body, by depriving them of the capacity of filling offices to which they had naturally an equal right with the rest of their fellow-citizens. As to the measure of injury sustained, Dissenters who were in places under government, had reason to complain that they were most cruelly treated. By the rest, however wickedly it was intended for their ruin, it might be converted into benefit. Those who will be contented to let others enjoy public offices of trust and profit, and will betake themselves to the employments of private social life, will have little reason to complain. Agriculture, trade, manufactures, and commerce present full scope to talents, and hold out to industry the most ample rewards. The independence which they confer, leads to a satisfaction and dignity of mind, as well as to a comfort in outward circumstances, which no one, who estimates aright the true happiness of life, can expect to find in public situations. In most of these, the rewards of labour are scanty, and far inferior to what the industrious man of business will attain; and where the emoluments are great, they depend on the nod of a minister, or his dependents. Sage experience teaches those, who have served the longest apprenticeship to life, the wisdom of the woman who,

when asked by the prophet, "Wilt thou be spoken of to the king, or to the captain of the host?" made this answer: "I dwell among mine own people."

When the act against occasional conformity passed, the Dissenters naturally hoped, that they had now felt the worst, especially as one of the clauses of the bill was, "that the toleration should remain inviolable, in all time to come." For surely, if truth were to be banished from the common intercourse of men, it ought to continue honoured in parliaments, in courts, and on thrones. By the recent law, enough, it might be thought, was done for the full security of the church from the very shadow of danger. But something more was now found necessary, and the safety of the established religion was made the stalking-horse to conceal the designs of the high Tory party in the state. The attachment of the Dissenters to civil liberty was found to be unalterable. It arose, indeed, out of their religious principles; for to civil liberty Dissenters owe their very existence in the country. On this account they were naturally led to side with the Whigs, whose professions were in favour of the sentiments which they held. Rage filled the breasts of the Tories, who knew their determined firmness; and as they could not hope to gain them to their side, they were resolved to crush them by successive measures, which, while they avoided the odium of doing it by one violent blow, would as certainly accomplish the object. This policy had been successfully employed against the Protestants in France.

Such was the reasoning of men, who, like Pharoah of old, on a similar subject, said, "let us deal wisely."

It was the purpose of Pharoah, and his ministers of state, to extirpate the Israelites as a distinct people; and in order to accomplish it they framed a decree, that the male children should all be drowned. A more refined policy prevailed in the cabinet of Anne. Having agreed on the destruction of the Dissenters, their determination was to deprive their children of an education according to their own principles; so that they must either remain ignorant, or derive instruction from masters who maintained principles destructive of their own. Julian, the apostate from the religion of Jesus, had adopted this refined barbarity of political wisdom in regard to the Christians; conceiving, no doubt, that ignorance would prepare their minds for returning to the absurdities of paganism. From him, most probably, was the lesson learned; for Julian's writings have been the delight of every infidel, and were probably the oracles consulted by the man in whose breast the schism bill originated. St. John, the infidel St. John, again stood forth as the champion of the church of England; and as he had been called up to the Lords by the title of Viscount Bolinbroke, Sir William Windham brought the bill into the lower house, on the 12th of May, in the year 1714. By this bill it was proposed to be enacted, "That no person should keep any public or private school, or seminary, to teach or instruct youth, as tutor or schoolmaster, unless he subscribed this declaration: 'I (A. B.) do declare, that I will conform to the liturgy of the church of England, as by law established,' and shall have had, or obtained, a licence from the archbishop, bishop, or ordinary of the place, under his seal of office. And whosoever should be found doing so,

without these qualifications, was, upon conviction, to suffer three months' imprisonment. No licence was to be granted, unless the person produced a certificate that he had received the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England, at some parish church, within the year. If, after this, the schoolmaster was to be present at a conventicle, or any other worship than that of the church of England, he was to be liable to three months' imprisonment, and from thenceforth be incapable of teaching in any school or seminary, or instructing any youth, as tutor or schoolmaster."

The next clause merits insertion in the very words of the act: "And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that if any person, licensed as aforesaid, *shall teach any other catechism than the catechism set forth in the book of Common Prayer*, the licence of such a person shall, from thenceforth, be void; and such person shall be liable to the penalties of the act." A person who, for the foregoing offences, had lost his licence, must, in order to be capable again of acting as a schoolmaster or tutor, be able to make oath in a court of justice, that, during the space of twelve months, he had not been present at a conventicle for dissenting worship, and had received the sacrament three times during the year, according to the usage of the church of England.

Such was the schism bill, the severity of which must shock the feelings of every ingenuous reader. Severe, however, as it appears, it is said to have been more so, when it came from the hands of Bolinbroke, Atterbury, and Windham, who were its authors; but

Harley had expunged the harshest and most persecuting clauses. The bill was strenuously supported by Bromley, Windham, and some others of inferior note; and most vigorously opposed by Hampden, Walpole, Stanhope, Lechmere, Sir Joseph Jekyll, and Sir Peter King: but opposition was fruitless. After warm debates, the bill was carried by two hundred and thirty-seven votes, against one hundred and twenty-six, and sent up to the Lords*.

From the Revolution to the accession of the House of Hanover, reason, justice, and moderation had more powerful advocates among the peers than in the House of Commons. The Lords Cowper, Wharton, Sunderland, Hallifax, Townsend, and Nottingham, gave the most decided opposition to the bill; but it was supported by all the powers of Bolinbroke, Abington, Anglesea, and the Lord Chancellor. The Bishop of London said, that the Dissenters made this bill neces-

* In this stage of the bill, Sir Richard Steele published a letter to a member of parliament, in which he points out the impolicy, injustice, and danger of this arbitrary measure: "When we consider the putting of this law into execution, there cannot be a more pleasant image presented to the imagination, than a poor schismatic schoolmistress, brought before a zealous angry squire for transgressing this act, and teaching one Presbyterian, little more than an animal, in what the letter D differed from the letter B; maliciously insinuating to another schismatic, aged five years old, without licence from the ordinary that O is round; and not contenting herself with merely showing to the said schismatics the letters of a certain book covered with horn, but instructing the said heretic to put them together, and make words of them; as appears by the affidavit of one who heard an infant schismatic say, o—f, of; another, o—b, ob. Prodigious! that a church, adorned with so many excellent and learned members, supplied by two famous universities, both endowed with ample revenues, immunities, and jurisdictions, should be affronted with the offer of being reinforced with the penal laws against the combination of women and children! You might, with the same propriety, provide against schismatic nurses."

sary, by their endeavours to propagate the schism, and to draw the children of churchmen to their schools and academies. The Dissenters petitioned to be heard by their counsel against the bill, but their petition was rejected. Lord Hallifax moved, that they might be allowed schools for the instruction of their own children, but it was carried against the motion, by sixty-two against forty-eight. Two clauses were, however, gained in their favour: one was, that the Dissenters might be permitted to have schoolmistresses to teach their children to read; and another, still more important, that this act should not extend to any person who should instruct youth in reading, writing, arithmetic, or any part of mathematical learning which relates to navigation, or any mechanical art only. The inflicting of the penalties, which was taken out of the hands of the justices of the peace, where the Commons had proposed to place it, and committed to the cognizance of the superior courts, gave some additional alleviation of the evil. On the third reading, an exemption from the penalties of the bill was proposed and obtained, for every person employed by any nobleman, or noblewoman, to teach in their families, provided he did, in every respect, qualify himself according to the act, except only in that of taking a licence from the bishop. The bill was made to extend to Ireland. So powerful was the opposition, that it was carried by not more than seventy-seven votes against seventy-two. Twenty-six temporal peers, and five bishops, entered their protest against it as the only possible remaining mark of their dislike. The Commons agreed to the amendments of the Lords. On the 25th day of June,

it received the royal assent by commission: its operation was to commence on the 1st of August*.

The Dissenters had, from the revolution, been enjoying the toleration with a grateful heart, and a peaceable deportment. They were neither intriguing against the government, nor giving it any opposition. In such circumstances, to enact a law for their destruction, was inexpressibly odious and severe. To deprive parents of the right of educating their own children, and of the power of committing them to the tuition of persons of their own principles, would have dishonoured a Hildebrand, and been not out of character in the successor of St. Dominic. To forbid ministers to teach any other catechism than that in the Common Prayer-Book, which is extremely imperfect and erroneous, and unspeakably inferior to the catechisms of all the other Protestant churches; and to render the teaching of any other, however excellent, such a breach of the act, as exposed the person to its heavy penalties, and utterly disqualified him for the future exercise of his office, betrayed a mind better suited to a monastery of Carthusian friars, than to the Lords and Commons of Great Britain. To deprive, at once, of their support, a considerable number of persons who had dedicated their time and talents to the instruction of youth, and reduce them and their families to certain beggary, without a cause, unveiled hearts callous to the sufferings of their fellow-citizens. To discourage learning at a time when, perhaps, two millions of the people were unable to read; to frame such a law, after a promise had been given, by both houses of parliament and the queen, that

* Tindal, p. 193—209.

the act of toleration should continue inviolable ; and to do all this, at the instigation and under the influence of an unprincipled infidel, who hated Christianity in every form ; presents a picture as unfavourable to the intelligence, the virtue, the public spirit, the political sagacity, and the liberality of that age, as their enemies could possibly wish.

While the ministry thus showed their enmity to the Dissenters, death stood their friend. On the 1st of August, 1719, the day on which the operation of the bill was to commence, Queen Anne gave up the ghost. The death of the queen is supposed to have been hastened by the quarrels of her ministers in her presence. It was with difficulty that she and her ladies-in-waiting could keep Harley and Bolinbroke from the most outrageous behaviour. The agitation of mind which this produced, and a consultation to fill up Harley's place, and a disagreement in opinion, protracted till two o'clock in the morning, had such an effect on her delicate frame, as to increase the disease, which ended in her dissolution, in the fifty-first year of her age, and thirteenth of her reign, and resigned her crown to a family, the successive monarchs of which have now, for nearly a century, uniformly proved themselves the friends of toleration, and of religious liberty. In consequence of this, the bill was never carried into effect. Bolinbroke was sent to do penance for his crimes in France *, and Harley in the Tower.

* After quitting the Pretender's service in France, when his affairs became desperate, Bolinbroke supplicated permission to return to England. Leave was granted, on the humiliating condition of having no seat in the House of Peers, and of not intermeddling in public affairs. He accepted the terms, returned to his native country, and lived many

SECT. III.—*The Spirit of Religious Liberty among the Dissenters, during this Period.*

THE greater part of the non-conformists were Presbyterians. As Presbyterianism is a system which will admit of being established, it is, in this respect, on a level with Episcopacy; and it resembles it, too, in having nothing in its nature which necessarily leads its votaries to be greater advocates for the rights of conscience. Of the intolerance of the Scotch Presbyterians their history is full. The English Presbyterians, in the days of their power, have no praise due to them for liberality of sentiment; but it is probable that the sufferings which they were afterwards called to endure, softened them down.

As the old generation were gathered to their fathers, their successors, discovering no symptoms of wishing to act upon the Presbyterian system, retained the name only, and not the thing. Their principles became far more tolerant and liberal. The preceding age had produced nothing which could be compared with Dr. Calamy's introduction to the second volume of his defence of moderate non-conformity*. How different

years. At his death, the public curiosity was raised to the highest pitch, in hopes of speedily being gratified with the perusal of some most marvellous writings of his against the Christian religion, which were to be published after he had sneaked out of the world. The timid friends of the Gospel were alarmed; and its enemies were all on tiptoe to see this mighty engine which was to beat down the walls of the Christian church, and rase them to the very foundation, when lo! *parturiunt montes, nascitur ridiculus mus*. The whole was mere *crambe recocta*, a repetition of the old stale objections which infidels had, for centuries before, been in vain urging against our holy religion.

* When Mr. Locke had read it, he sent word to the Doctor by a

are the sentiments of Calamy from those of Edwards, the violent Presbyterian in the days of the Long Parliament ! During the succeeding years of persecution, the gospel engaged their chief attention, and supported them under their suffering. When the revolution brought with it the enjoyment of quietness, and freedom from oppression, the minds of the Dissenters naturally took a wider range, and acquired considerable enlargement as to their ideas of religious liberty.

That principle of the Independents which renders the renovation of the heart, or, in other words, the possession of real religion, necessary to a person's being a member of the church, has a natural tendency to preserve them from a spirit of intolerance and persecution ; as none can have a share in the regulation of their ecclesiastical concerns, but such as profess to deny themselves, to take up their cross, and follow Christ. The system is likewise unfit for being moulded into a national establishment, and cannot admit the great ones of the earth into their communion, in a body, or at their will. Independency, however, has few, or none, of those temptations to which both Episcopacy and Presbytery are so much exposed. It may not unreasonably be expected, that those who had embraced this system would have just ideas of religious liberty ; for where there is no bias of worldly interest, to generate and foster prejudice, the truth will be more clearly perceived and more readily admitted. This advantage the Independents peculiarly enjoyed ; and though, at friend, that while he kept to these principles, and defended the Dissenters on that ground, he might defy the assaults of all their enemies.

first, some of them were limited in their views of religious liberty, they were in possession of the leading ideas. The next generation improved on these discoveries. The enjoyment of religious liberty, in consequence of the Revolution, communicated along with other benefits, a better temper, and enabled the Dissenters to examine their principles with a calmer mind, and with kinder dispositions towards men of every denomination. In such a state of mind, persons are enabled to think more correctly, and to judge with greater precision: the result was beneficial to themselves and to the world. The folly and wickedness of intolerance stared them in the face, and they more deeply felt that the rights of conscience ought to be inviolably sacred, and that all, without exception, should enjoy the liberty of worshipping God, in the way which appeared in their eyes most agreeable to divine institution.

The Baptists adopted the distinguishing sentiments and modes of the Independents. The former had in the days of suffering, kept pace with their brethren in the reception of every general principle, and in their zeal for the doctrine of religious liberty. As the Baptists had the same advantages for free and unbiassed enquiry, they made equal improvements, and by the exhibition of the same liberal ideas, rendered a benefit to their country and to mankind.

To the Quakers all must look with respect for the justness of their ideas in everything relative to religious liberty, and the rights of conscience. They were not the first to bring forth the doctrine before the world; but, from their very origin, their sentiments on this sub-

ject were perfectly correct. And, what sheds a lustre of glory over them, they have universally maintained, and invariably acted upon them, in every country, not excepting those in which they have possessed the greatest influence, and the governing power. On the whole, this period may be considered as highly favourable to the spirit of religious liberty.

CHAP. IV.

SEMINARIES AMONG THE DISSENTERS.

SECT. I.—*Origin of Seminaries in the Christian Church.*

THERE were schools of the Prophets under the Old Testament, in which young men were trained up in the study of the Law of Moses. Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, appear to have presided in these seminaries of learning. Many, who have an hypothesis to support, would be greatly delighted if they could produce so respectable authority in its favour. But there is more than analogy, there is Divine Authority for educating men for the Christian ministry. In 2 Tim. ii. 2, the Apostle Paul gives the following charge: “The things which thou hast heard of me, before many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” The system to be taught is the Gospel of Jesus Christ,—the things which Jesus Christ had revealed to Paul. The tutor, or professor, Timothy, an Evangelist, who had himself studied under the Apostle Paul, and learned from him, both in public and in private, all those glorious truths which “make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.” The students are described,—they must be “faithful men,” true believers in Christ. The term of their course of study is specified; and it is to continue till they be so thoroughly instructed, that “they

shall be able to teach others*.” The foundation is laid by the God of nature, in endowing the student with good abilities and powerful talents; and by the God of grace, in renewing the soul, and sanctifying these talents for the service of Christ. On this foundation, a course of evangelical instruction, under an eminent and experienced servant of the Redeemer, is reared; and the result is a fitness for the work of the ministry, for which it is intimated that this education will qualify the student of sacred truth. Such is the mode which the Holy Spirit prescribes, as the ordinary way of preparing persons for the ministry of the word †. The interpretation of this passage, though first suggested from the reading of the Scriptures, will receive confirmation from the testimony of some of the most approved commentators, in different communions in the Christian church.

When, from the sacred Scriptures, we turn to antiquity, the silence of ecclesiastical writers on this

* Against those educated in seminaries, an objection has frequently been urged, that they are *man-made* ministers. But if they be *faithful* men, the objection falls to the ground; for they were previously taught of God, and are sent by him. It is readily granted, that if students, though they may have been in seminaries, are not holy men, they are utterly unfit for the work of the ministry, and merit the reproachful epithet of *man-made* ministers. But let it be remembered, that persons destitute of Divine grace, or of gifts for the pastoral office, may set up themselves for preachers; and when this is the case, we beg to know whether *self-made* ministers are one whit better than *man-made* ministers?

† We say the *ordinary* way, for where circumstances are such that it cannot be obtained, ministers must do without it. The necessities of the church may render it proper that men should be ministers, who have not enjoyed the advantages of an academical, or even a liberal education. After the revocation of the edict of Nantes, the French Protestants called to the pastoral office the most zealous of their members, and are indebted to those lay-preachers for the continuance of their existence.

subject surprises us. Of the famous school of Alexandria, under the direction of Pantænus, Origen, Cyril, and others, the praise has resounded through every part of the literary world. Theology, as well as the sciences, was taught there; but it seems to have been for general use rather than any particular office, and the mixture of secular science with theology was injurious to the church.

Teachers of eloquence and philosophy abounded for several centuries after the Christian æra, and we read often of their labours. But, where theology was studied is by no means so plain. The centuriators of Magdeburgh, though so copious on most topics, here have nothing to say. The indefatigable Tillemont, in his voluminous account of the first six centuries, affords little satisfaction on this subject. Bingham announces his intention to give an account of the seminaries: whether death or inability prevented him we know not, but he has not performed his promise. It is the opinion of the two former of these, as well as of the learned Spanhemius in his ecclesiastical history, that those who had the work of the ministry in view, were instructed by the more learned bishops in the different churches, and, in some instances, by men of note who had embraced the monastic life. From the reserve of historians, during many centuries, there is ground to fear, that the education of persons for the pastoral office was very much neglected; and that to this neglect we are to attribute the increase of ignorance, and of superstition, which, from the days of the Apostles, gradually spread themselves over the Christian church. For though a few eminent men appeared in the third and

fourth centuries, the mass of the clergy were but indifferently skilled in the knowledge of the sacred Scriptures. This will account for the rapid progress of superstitious stupidity which so extensively covered the whole of Christendom.

In the eighth century, we first meet with regulations for the instruction of the clergy. Charlemagne, one of those extraordinary men whom Divine Providence raises up to be a blessing to mankind, bewailing the ignorance of the age, and eager for the diffusion of useful knowledge, of every kind, instituted schools and colleges, in different parts of his dominions, and published a decree, that the youth designed for the priesthood should be taught in the cathedrals, by the bishops and superior clergy, the principles of sacred literature, and the maxims of a holy life, that they might be qualified to become the salt of the earth*.

The example of Charles was happily imitated, not only by his successors, but by the rulers of other countries ; and, from century to century, universities arose in every European kingdom, and vied with each other for the palm of learning. The various branches of literature were cultivated with most assiduous labour, if not with corresponding success ; and theology had its professors, who taught it in that scholastic form which, though it has now fallen into disrepute, was then considered as the very acmé of perfection. But it still continued to be pursued in the abodes of the bishops, and was the usual appendage of a cathedral ;

* Centuriat. Magdeburg.

and in some Romish countries this has been the practice nearly to the present time.

In the English universities, sacred literature was cultivated along with human science. Wickliffe was employed in teaching theology to the students at Oxford. When the Reformation really began, under the auspices of Edward VI., that excellent young monarch sent for two learned foreigners, Bucer and Peter Martyr; and placed them in the theological chairs of the two seats of learning, for the instruction of the English youth. The changes in Mary's reign were soon repaired by her successor, and from that time to the restoration, every branch of sacred literature was cultivated with a degree of assiduity and success, to which, if we judge from the character and abilities of the scholars and divines whom they sent forth, the history of the church can produce nothing superior, in any country, or in any age*.

Till this time, the number of those who could not, from scruples of conscience, avail themselves of the advantages to be derived from an education in the universities, was inconsiderable. But the act which produced two thousand Non-conformists among the

* By some, the universities are said to have declined, after the parliament's visitors displaced many of the professors and heads of colleges, on account of their attachment to the royal cause, and put new ones in their place. But if we may be allowed to judge of the qualifications of the teachers by the improvement of the scholars, the decision must be, that learning sustained no injury by the change. The greater part of those eminent men, who made so conspicuous a figure, from the Restoration down to the accession of the House of Hanover, were educated under the Parliament doctors, and such a constellation of persons of genius, literature, and virtue, no succeeding generation of masters Oxford and Cambridge has produced.

clergy, and some hundreds of thousands among the laity, created an unhappy change. The gates of the universities were shut against every theological student who could not declare his unfeigned assent and consent to the long list of articles which conformity prescribes.

In Scotland, the schools of literature have always been open to men of every church; and ingenious youth, in quest of knowledge, have been invited to enter the temple of science, and of theology too, without having the question asked, "To what religious sect do you belong?" Presbyterians of the kirk, seceders of various names, Episcopalians, Independents, Baptists, and Methodists, there pursue their studies, without hostility, and without strife; and the honorary degrees are equally accessible to all. If there be any perceptible effect from the diversity of denominations, it is to produce an emulation for excellence in every breast, that each may confer honour on his own. Most of the foreign Protestant colleges observe the same generous line of conduct. But liberality in this respect has never been an attribute of the English universities. They are considered as the exclusive property of the dominant sect; and statutes still subsist in full force, which were perhaps enacted in the days of the crusades, or at least accord with the sentiments of the men of that time, better than with those of the nineteenth century. When will England throw open the gates of learning to all her sons without exception; and invite to her universities, the British youth of every denomination, that society may be strengthened and adorned with well-instructed men in every department of business and

and in some Roman countries this has been the practice nearly to the present time.

In the English universities, sacred literature was cultivated along with human sciences. Wickliffe was employed in teaching theology to the students at Oxford. When the Reformation really began, under the auspices of Edward VI., that excellent young monarch sent for two learned foreigners, Bucer and Peter Martyr, and placed them in the theological chairs of the two seats of learning for the instruction of the English youth. The changes in Mary's reign were soon repaired by her successor, and from that time to the restoration every branch of sacred literature was cultivated with a degree of assiduity and success, in which, if we judge from the character and abilities of the scholars and divines whom they sent forth, the history of the church can produce nothing superior, in any country, or in any age.²⁸

Till this time, the number of those who could not, from scruples of conscience, avail themselves of the advantages to be derived from an education in the universities, was inconsiderable. But the act which expelled two thousand Non-conformists among the

²⁸ If some universities are said to have declined, after the partition of the kingdom, many of the professors and heads of colleges, were removed to the continent, to the royal courts, and put new ones in their stead. It may be allowed to judge of the qualifications of these, from the improvement of the studies, the decision must be, that they were not injured by the change. The greater part of the dissenting ministers, who made so conspicuous a figure from the Restoration, had been educated in the universities. However, were educated in the dissenting academies, and were a generation of persons of great piety and virtue, as succeeding generations of ministers Oxford have produced.

clergy, and some hundreds of thousands among the laity, created an unhappy change. The gates of the universities were shut against every theological student who could not declare his unfeigned assent and consent to the long list of articles which conformity prescribes.

In Scotland, the schools of literature have always been open to men of every church; and ingenious youth, in quest of knowledge, have been invited to enter the temple of science, and of theology too, without having the question asked, "To what religious sect do you belong?" Presbyterians of the kirk, seceders of various names, Episcopalians, Independents, Baptists, and Methodists, there pursue their studies, without hostility, and without strife; and the honorary degrees are equally accessible to all. If there be any perceptible effect from the diversity of denominations, it is to produce an emulation for excellence in every breast, that each may confer honour on his own. Most of the foreign Protestant colleges observe the same generous line of conduct. But liberality in this respect has never been an attribute of the English universities. They are considered as the exclusive property of the dominant sect; and statutes still subsist in full force, which were perhaps enacted in the days of the crusades, or at least accord with the sentiments of the men of that time, better than with those of the nineteenth century. When will England throw open the gates of learning to all her sons without exception; and invite to her universities, the British youth of every denomination, that society may be strengthened and adorned with well-ted men in every department of business and

station of life? Few things would more effectually conduce to wear away prejudice, to mitigate the violence of party spirit, and to produce forbearance, harmony and union, than free intercourse among the youth in the acquisition of that literature which is equally necessary for them all. From that amiable spirit of philanthropy and moral patriotism, which is widely diffused, both among public characters, and men of the first respectability in private life, much is to be hoped for; and it is no presumption to expect, that when the subject has for some time been before the public, and fully investigated, and its benefits displayed, the discussion will issue in conceding the desirable privilege in its full extent.

In the English seats of learning, contrary to the practice of most of the other universities in Europe, the chief part of the business is performed, not by the professors of the different departments of science, but by private tutors. Of these, many ranked among the Non-conformists; and as tutors were needed for training up a rising race of pastors for the newly-formed churches, they were as well qualified for the task as ever, and could communicate their instructions, in other places, as well as at Oxford and Cambridge. Such were the first teachers of theology among the Dissenters, and by them was formed the second generation of their ministers. Such was the origin of our system of clerical education. Our dissenting academies arose out of the universities. Persons educated in the universities, afterwards taught, to a company of Non-conforming youths, what they had there learned, and what some of them had there taught.

SECT. II.—*Account of the Different Seminaries and Tutors among the Dissenters.*

AT the head of the list of Dissenting Tutors, Richard Frankland, A.M., may with propriety be placed. He studied at Cambridge with considerable credit; and there acquired what is infinitely more valuable than learning, that faith which purifieth the heart, and worketh by love. After preaching in different places, he was settled at Bishop Auckland, in the county of Durham. While he was labouring diligently and acceptably in this place, he was called to another office of importance, by Oliver Cromwell, who then swayed the sceptre of authority over England. When a new man rises to sovereign sway, if he be a man of talents, which is usually the case, feeling none of the hereditary sentiments of those whose descent is from a long line of monarchs, he has no respect for usages merely on account of their antiquity, and is not deterred from adopting plans which are new, for want of precedent to give them authority, provided they appear beneficial to the community. Such was the spirit of the Protector, under whom neither religion, nor morals, nor learning declined. Oxford and Cambridge had long enjoyed the unrivalled honour of being the seats of learning; but Oliver perceiving the inconvenience of the students being obliged to go so far for education; and knowing, from his own experience, that many a promising youth has no money to spare for travelling some hundred miles, the Protector determined to bring learning to their doors, and fixed on Durham as a third university, for the benefit of the northern parts of England. When we consider

Cromwell's peculiar talent, in appointing to offices of every kind, it is not a little to the honour of Mr. Frankland, that he was chosen vice-president of the infant college. When the Protector died, the Durham college lost its patron, and at the restoration everything returned into its ancient channel. All the friends of literature must view its abolition with regret. When learning comes to the door, multitudes will receive her, not only with readiness, but with gratitude, who are unable to travel hundreds of miles, to pay her court. There is abundant room in England for four universities; and had Durham and Exeter been associated with Oxford and Cambridge, from the days of Oliver Cromwell to the present time, learning, and, it is to be hoped, virtue and religion too, would have been far more widely diffused through the country.

The restoration of Charles was to Mr. Frankland the beginning of sorrows; and, after enduring the malice of the adversaries of everything which is good, the act of uniformity obliged him to retire from the scene of his parochial labours, without the pale of the established church. Cosins, bishop of Durham, earnestly urged him to conform; for Mr. Frankland was so respectable a man, that every good prelate must be desirous to have such clergy. But his conscience would not permit him to comply. Re-ordination by the hands of a diocesan bishop he could not submit to, as he was conscious of the validity of the orders which he had before received from the pastors of the neighbouring churches.

Being silenced by that horrible decree of ejectment, written in the blood of millions of immortal souls, he

retired to a private estate which he had at Rathmel, in Yorkshire. But unwilling to spend life in idleness, and hide his talents in a napkin, and acting upon the wise and benevolent maxim, that “when we cannot do what we would, we should do what we can,” he, by the advice of his friends, set up a private academy in his own house. Some of the neighbouring gentry intrusted him with the instruction of their sons, instead of sending them to the universities; and he educated a considerable number of young persons for the work of the ministry. He continued in this office, from the year 1665, till the day of his death. By the iniquity of the times, he was obliged frequently to change the place of his abode. In the year 1674, he removed to Natland, near Kendal, in Westmoreland; from thence, by reason of the five-mile act, to Dawsonfield, in the same county; from thence to Halburrow, in Lancashire; from thence to Calton, in Craven, in Yorkshire; then to Attercliff, near Sheffield; and last of all, back again to Rathmel. The good man’s life was a pilgrimage indeed, in external changes, as well as in the inward temper of his mind; and the students, as well as the tutor, were disciples of the cross. In all these places, he diligently exercised the pastoral office, was highly esteemed in love for his work’s sake, and his labours were crowned with remarkable success.

In the latter part of his life, he met with much vexation from the ecclesiastical courts. Scarcely a year elapsed, from 1688, till his death, in which he did not suffer trouble for keeping an academy, and training up young men for the dissenting ministry. He was once, for non-appearance, excommunicated. This dreadful

sentence, savage as the darkest ages of popery, which pollutes not the page only, but the volume in which it is contained, would have been put in execution, but for the interposition of friends with good King William, who, as head of the church of England, ordered Mr. Frankland's absolution to be read in the parish church. But his troubles from wicked and unreasonable men did not end, till death, the messenger of rest and peace to the servants of Christ, set him free from these enemies, as well as from the stone and strangury, and various other infirmities, which he had borne with exemplary patience. He departed this life in October, 1698, aged sixty-eight years.

“ He was (says Dr. Calamy) an eminent divine, and an acute metaphysician, a solid interpreter of Scripture, very sagacious in discovering errors, and able in defending truth. He was a person of great humility and affability; not a very popular, but a substantial preacher. Few conversed with him but respected and valued him. He was a man of great moderation, very liberal to the poor, studious to promote the gospel in all places, and good in all relations in life*.”

In the list of his students now before us, who amount to upwards of three hundred, are the names of many who were a blessing to the dissenting churches in the following age, and whose memory will be held in veneration by all who are friends to sacred literature, unfeigned piety, and fervent zeal.

Mr. Frankland was succeeded by Timothy Jollie, whose father, Thomas Jollie, was ejected from the

* Non-conformists' Memorial, vol. ii. p. 180.

living of Althome, in Lancashire, an eminent man, who, for his non-conformity, suffered more abundant vexations and persecutions than most of his brethren; but lived afterwards to see days of peace, and died in the year 1703, at an advanced age. It is delightful to see a son who inherits the virtues of such a father. Timothy Jollie studied under Mr. Frankland, and was ordained pastor of a church at Sheffield in the year 1681. The following year, his goods were spoiled, and he was confined in York Castle, under the operation of the five-mile act. On the death of Mr. Frankland, Mr. Jollie entered on the arduous office of tutor; and the academy was removed to Attercliff, a village in the vicinity of Sheffield. There he dwelt during the remainder of his days, and continued to discharge the duties both of the pastor and tutor, with great assiduity and acceptance, till the year 1714, when he was called away from his earthly labours, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

Timothy Jollie was a very superior man, both for learning and for goodness. His person charmed by the union of dignity with sweetness, his voice was music, and his elocution fascinating. His natural talents were extraordinary; and his acquirements in theology and the branches of knowledge connected with it, were such as might be expected from a course of ardent and persevering study. He shone as a tutor, in the communication of knowledge, and in the government of his scholars. An elevated spirit of devotion crowned the whole, and gave energy and unction to all his services, both in the pulpit and in the lecture-room. His pupil, Dr. Grosvenor, speaks with gratitude and delight of Mr. Jollie's zeal, and of the benefit derived from his pious

and affectionate counsels. In the year 1700, the number of students amounted to twenty-six. His death at so early a period as fifty-four was a severe loss to the Dissenters, and to the church of Christ. He left a son in the ministry, who first assisted, and then succeeded Mr. Matthew Clark in London.

Taunton, in Somersetshire, was the seat of another academy, instituted about the same time with the former, under the superintendence of Matthew Warren. He was educated at Oxford, and afterwards settled at Downhead, in Oxfordshire. Being ejected by the Act of Uniformity, he was prevailed on to instruct young men for the work of the ministry. His qualifications are highly extolled by his contemporaries. To a sufficient portion of learning, he united those qualities, which are necessary to give learning its due influence and use. The talent of conveying knowledge to the weakest capacity, he possessed in an eminent degree. To the various tastes and dispositions of his students, he accommodated himself so as most effectually to facilitate their progress in science. From that disposition of mind, which would compel every student to think in every thing like his tutor, he was far removed. But, while he wished them to form their own judgment, so that their system might be the result of conviction, he was careful to guard them against those errors which undermine the foundations of religion. His unfeigned piety, humility, modesty, and sweetly cheerful temper engaged the affections of the students.

In the stormy reign of Charles II., he had to contend with all the vexation, and all the dangers of

imprisonment and fines. To academical pursuits, the fears of confinement in a jail, and the concealment necessary to prevent it, were very unfavourable; but the superior energy which the mind acquires in such seasons, enables it to snatch opportunities which others would overlook, and to improve by events, as well as books.

When James's enthusiasm for Popery was overruled to give the wearied Dissenters a reprieve from persecution, the people assembled openly for public worship. A large congregation at Taunton invited Mr. Warren to undertake the pastoral charge in that place, in conjunction with the Rev. Emanuel Hartford, a fellow-sufferer for Non-conformity. This double office brought with it a great addition of duties; but he proved himself an able and faithful pastor. His sermons were perspicuous and weighty, and were delivered with affection. It was his endeavour to make them intelligible to the weakest of his hearers, preferring the benefit of others to his own fame. He was a man of peace and moderation, and harmony reigned among his flock. His own latter end was peace. On the approach of death, his answer to a friend, who inquired after his welfare, was: "I am just going into eternity: but I bless God I am neither ashamed to live, nor afraid to die." He died on the 14th of June, 1706, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. He had sent out a considerable number of young men, many of whom were useful in the ministry; many appeared with honour in private stations; and the academy was very full at the time of his decease.

His successor in the theological chair was Stephen James, who had been educated under him, and was afterwards his assistant in those branches of knowledge, which are considered as subsidiary to theological pursuits. He was minister of a congregation at Fulwood, in the vicinity of Taunton. Philosophy and mathematics were taught by the Rev. Robert Darch; and the celebrated Mr. Grove had pneumatology and ethics assigned him as his province*. These appointments were sanctioned by the unanimous vote of a considerable number of ministers, who assembled for the purpose. As the labours of these tutors were continued into the next period of our history, a more particular account of them will then be given. Nothing more remains to be noticed now, but that when the Schism Bill passed, the operations of this institution were suspended for a season. If they have been called Goths who could shut up schools for teaching useful human knowledge what name shall be given to those, who with senatorial deliberation could break up institutions framed for the dissemination of Divine truth, to save immortal souls?

Shrewsbury was the site of another seminary for the education of dissenting ministers. The Non-conformists in that town were happy in the possession of Francis Tallents and John Bryan, who had formerly officiated in the parish churches, but afterwards preached to those who, like themselves, felt it their duty to dissent. Mr. Tallents was a man of superior learning, educated at Cambridge, Fellow, and afterwards Vice-president, of Magdalen College, a tutor of

* Grove's Life, p. 22.

celebrity, and therefore well qualified to assist in academical instruction. To young men who were prosecuting their theological studies, he cheerfully communicated help. But the academy there appears to have been brought into full effect and form under one of his colleagues in office.

This person was James Owen, and he did not disgrace the name which had been raised to imperial dignity in the theological world by Dr. John Owen. South Wales was the native country of James Owen; his friends were all of high-church principles; and they had preferment to bestow, if he would have continued in the bosom of the establishment; but he followed the dictates of his conscience, and became a Dissenter. He studied under Mr. Samuel Jones, of Brynllwarch, in Glamorganshire, and during the heat of persecution, entered as a labourer into the vineyard of his Lord. Loss of goods, imprisonments, with the addition of cruel mockings, were Mr. Owen's lot. From a prison he writes thus to a friend: "If the Gospel be not worth suffering for, it is not worth preaching. It is, indeed, an honour, after we have preached the truth, to be called forth to suffer for it."

He was at first pastor of a small congregation at Swiney, near Oswestry, and at the same time chaplain to a family there. For convenience, in the year 1679, the congregation removed into the town. After labouring in Oswestry twenty years, he settled, on the death of Mr. Bryan, at Shrewsbury. While he there discharged the duties of the pastoral office with fidelity and acceptance, he appeared with high respectability at the head of a theological seminary. It had been

formed soon after his settlement at Oswestry, and gradually increased. He was well qualified for the work: his natural abilities were great, his learning considerable, his application above measure. For sixteen hours a day he studied. As a divine, a linguist, a man of science, and an historian, both ecclesiastical and civil, he was far above the ordinary standard. His manner of conducting the academy gives a high idea of his capacity, his assiduity, and his unwearied attention to the improvement of his pupils.

There was a peculiarity in one part of his academical practice, which merits observation. In the theological disputes among the students, which were everywhere common in those days, he would not allow the opponent to the truth to stand forth in his own person, and to bring the arguments and objections as his own, but desired him to mention them as the arguments of the sect by name. The mind, he judged, should be preserved as pure from error as from vice. Truth should be so sacred, that it ought never to be contradicted and opposed as if it were error; nor should the garb of error be put on, in order to deceive, as if it were the clothing of truth. By appearing as the champion for error, a youth has sometimes become enamoured of arguments of his own invention; and, from trying what he could say in its favour, has insensibly slidden into an adoption of the system. Such a practice pollutes the soul, destroys that acute sensibility to truth which ought to be cherished in every student of divine knowledge, and has a tendency to produce an indifference to truth and error*.

* Dr. Johnson, that accurate critic in the science of human nature,

The stone, the instrument of death to the divines of that century, put an end to Mr. Owen's valuable life, in the year 1706, when he was only fifty-two years of age. Amidst the tortures inflicted by this disease, he displayed the faith, the patience, the hope, and the joy of a disciple of Christ. In the most affectionate manner he recommended to his students a life of devotedness to God, and to the souls of men: "I would not," said he, "for ten thousand worlds but have lived as I did. Now I have the blessed comforts of it; and would not, for a world, be without these divine joys which refresh my soul *."

Samuel Benion, M.D. was, both in the academy and in the church, a successor not unworthy of Mr. Owen. Born in Shropshire, Mr. Benion had received a classical education under Mr. Ogden, a celebrated schoolmaster at Wirksworth, and afterwards spent some time with Mr. Philip Henry, at Broad Oak, both as a teacher of some young gentlemen who boarded in the house, and a pupil under Mr. Henry, who instructed him in academical knowledge, and directed his theological studies. In 1695, he went to the college of Glasgow, and spent a year there with such economy of time, that he scarcely allowed himself sufficient leisure for food

introduces, in one of his periodical papers, a person who had been all his life a disputant; and who, for the sake of dispute, as often adopted the wrong side of the question as the right, bitterly lamenting that he had lost all relish for what is true and good, and that error and evil had unhappily become as eligible to him as truth and goodness. Whether it was a real case, we know not, but the writer discovered a just knowledge of the heart, and delineated the character which such a practice was calculated to form.

* Life of James Owen.

and sleep. His love for learning, and his amiable deportment gained him the esteem and friendship of the professors in a very high degree*.

The death of Mr. Philip Henry, whose praise is in all the churches, took place a few days after Mr. Benion's return to his friends; and the destitute congregation at Broad Oak immediately cast their eyes on him as a successor to their venerable pastor. But it was not without great difficulty that he could be prevailed on to comply with their wishes. The thoughts of standing in Philip Henry's place terrified him; but he consented to continue with them as a preacher, and some years afterwards was ordained their pastor.

His superior talents, his rapid improvement, and his studious turn of mind being observed by his friends, he was solicited to instruct young men for the ministry. He undertook the task, and, at the same time, improved the advantages of his retired situation, to acquire those branches of knowledge which would render him more accomplished as a tutor. After ten years' labours at Broad Oak, he removed, in 1706, to Shrewsbury, and united his academy to that which was left by Mr. Owen.

To learning, which is calculated to gain the esteem of students, he united an affectionate concern for their welfare, which wins the heart. Elocution he possessed in an eminent degree. He had a fluency of expression

* He visited that country again in the year 1703, and took his degree of doctor of medicine. The account which he gives of its moral state will be no less surprising to the natives of Scotland now, than to those who live south of the Tweed. "All the while he was at Glasgow, though he lay in a public inn, he never saw any drunk, nor heard one swear. And in all the inns on the road in Scotland, where he lay, though some of them were mean, they had family worship daily performed, morning and evening."—*Mathew Henry's Works*, p. 596.

which was never at a loss for words, and a quickness of invention which readily supplied ideas at the moment, in such order and propriety that his extemporary addresses had all the appearance of elaborate study; and his elevated piety gave an inexpressible charm to the whole. By the union of these excellencies, he was, as a pastor, highly acceptable to his flock, and, as a tutor, an exalted pattern to his students. He so much admired the discipline of the college of Glasgow, that as far as circumstances would permit, he modelled his academy to a similar form. While all beheld him with pleasure, and looked forward to many future years in which he would shine as a light in the world, a fever stole insensibly upon him, till its violence overcame his mental powers, and put an end to his valuable life on the 4th of March, in the year 1708, in the thirty-fifth year of his age*. He had, at that time, thirty students under his tuition, with the prospect of an increase.

In little more than a month afterwards, Shrewsbury sustained the loss of his aged colleague Mr. Tallents, whose counsel, if not personal assistance in the academy, must have proved a considerable benefit both to Dr. Benion and his scholars. He was a man of a catholic spirit, and considered himself as born to advance the cause of pure and undefiled religion. When the new meeting-house was built, in the year 1691, he caused it to be written on the walls, that it was erected "not for a faction or a party, but for promoting repentance and faith, in communion with all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Some days before his death, he blessed God for his mercy and love, and

* Henry's Works, p. 594, &c.

exclaimed, "I am more full of comfort and joy than I am able to express." Providence, which measures the days of man in a way so mysterious, had lengthened out his life to the age of eighty-nine years. He died April 11th, in the year 1708. Mr. Henry says: "he was very much a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian, a great admirer of Christ and free grace, and a man of eminent prudence, and heavenly-mindedness." Mr. Dawes, the clergyman who had read the service over many an evil-doer in Salop, refused to say over the corpse of Mr. Tallents, "*in sure and certain hope*:" conscience would allow him to say, only—*in hope**.

As John Reynolds, who succeeded Dr. Benion, lived into the second period of our history, his life will be recorded there.

The metropolis had, as might be expected, literary institutions for the benefit of dissenting youth. John Spademan, who was engaged in the service of an academy in Hoxton-square, London, is entitled to an honourable place among the tutors of this period. His father, Thomas Spademan, was ejected from the living of Authorpe, in Lincolnshire, and was afterwards pastor of a congregation at Boston. The son was educated at Magdalen College, in Cambridge; and afterwards held the living of Swayton, several years after the act of uniformity. But, becoming dissatisfied with the terms of communion, and unable to perform the clerical duties with a good conscience, he resigned the benefice, and took his lot among the Dissenters.

In the discouraging state of public affairs at that

* Henry's Works, pp. 613—20. Calamy's Continuation, p. 722.

time, Holland, a sanctuary for the persecuted and oppressed, presented to him, not only a peaceful abode, but an extensive and agreeable field of labour. He was chosen pastor of the English Presbyterian church at Rotterdam. While he taught, he did not cease to learn, and entered on a course of studies on the subjects belonging to the character and pursuits of a divine, with such assiduity and perseverance, as to collect in his capacious mind an ample treasure of the most valuable knowledge. The person who acts in this manner, and endeavours to make himself master of everything belonging to his profession, qualifies himself for more extensive usefulness.

Some time after the revolution, Mr. Spademan returned to England, and was chosen co-pastor with the great Mr. Howe; to be connected with whom, and to be thought worthy to fill the same pulpit, was an honour of which a man might be tempted to boast. At the close of the century, Dr. Joshua Oldfield, who had been a tutor in the country, was called to London, and Mr. Spademan and Mr. Lorimer united with him in establishing, in Hoxton Square, an academy which became celebrated for literature both human and divine. Mr. Spademan appears to have taught the oriental languages. While many years of usefulness might yet have been expected, he finished his course with the spirit of a Christian, on the 4th of September, in the year 1708.

Mr. Spademan's qualifications as a tutor were of the first rate. He was well skilled in philosophy and history; thoroughly versed in controversial theology; and for an accurate knowledge of the learned

languages, especially the originals of the sacred Scriptures, he had few equals. He had read with attention the works of the most eminent critics, and was himself a critic of no mean note. His devotedness to God was eminent, and he was crucified to the world. Benevolence to the poor he carried almost to an excess. His moderation as to other denominations of Christians was exemplary. He was especially noted for sincerity and uprightness both towards God and man. There is a subtle policy with which some ingenious clerks carry on their projects of advancement, to which he was an entire stranger ; and there is a sectarian craft by which some contrive to bring people over to their party, and afterwards to preserve their attachment, into whose secrets the soul of John Spademan never entered. He was very communicative to younger ministers, and ready to assist them with his advice. On the evening before his death, he gave to one who applied to him, the following counsels : “ First, Charge it upon yourself every day, to make a solemn resignation of yourself and your affairs into the hands of God, and lean not to your own understanding. Secondly, As to your public and preaching work, though the doctrines and duties relating to the rule of Christ’s kingdom are by no means to be neglected, yet, above all things, endeavour to bring your hearers to a new heart and a new spirit, without which all will signify nothing ; and for want of which, I have seen many who made a fair appearance in religion, come in a little time to make light of Christ, the sum and substance of our religion*.”

He was succeeded in the academy by Mr. Capel,

* Funeral Sermon by Mr. Rosewell.

who had been professor of Hebrew in the university of Saumur, before the revocation of the edict of Nantes. But the remainder of the history of this institution we defer till the second period.

The other seminary in London is remarkable for being the only one which has continued from the first period of our history to the present day. It was instituted by the Independents, and supported by a fund which they raised in their congregations. One of the first tutors was Isaac Chauncy, A.M. and M.D. He was the eldest son of the Rev. Charles Chauncy, minister of Ware, in Hertfordshire, a Puritan, who sought a sanctuary from persecution, in New England, where he was appointed president of Harvard college. The freedom enjoyed at home during the Commonwealth, by those who were not of the Episcopal persuasion, brought back from America some of those who had emigrated, and the sons of others. Isaac Chauncy was one of these, and he obtained the rectory of Woodborough, in Wiltshire. Being ejected by the Bartholomew Act, he removed to Andover, where he was, for some time, pastor of a congregational church. He came to London, soon after the recalling of king Charles's indulgence, with a view to practice medicine, which was hereditary in his family. But, after the death of Mr. Clarkson, he was, in the year 1687, chosen to be his successor. To come into the pulpit after Caryl, Owen, and Clarkson, was an arduous task, and beyond Dr. Chauncy's strength. Though a learned divine, he was not a popular preacher; and to add to the evil, being a stiff, or some would say, a furious

Independent, he tormented his people from the pulpit with frequent dissertations on church government. When he should have been calling sinners to repent, and to flee to the Saviour for mercy, he was entertaining them with the order and discipline of a congregational church; and when he ought to have been edifying believers, by illustrating the doctrines and promises of the word of God, he was instructing them in every punctilio of the Independent modes and forms. Such topics, however proper in their place, do not satisfy the appetite of an hungry soul; and to the credit of his flock it must be spoken, the greater part of them went away to societies where they could hear of Jesus Christ and his great salvation.

When preachers become fond of nick nacks*, and put any other thing, whether science, peculiar opinions, or distinguishing forms of church government, in the room of the grand principles of the Gospel, the effect among Dissenters, and indeed in all voluntary societies, is to scatter the congregation. Except a few partisans who enter into the notions of the preacher, the rest feel no interest, grow weary, and go somewhere else, or nowhere at all. Dr. Chauncy, finding that he was forsaken, and that the pews were growing as numerous as the hearers, determined to quit the ministry, and could not be prevailed on by any intreaties to continue in the pastoral office: nor can we regret, since he gave place to Dr. Watts.

However unsuccessful Dr. Chauncy was as a preacher, his brethren considered him qualified to be a tutor, and

* It is difficult to invent a more appropriate term than this, which we find in the works of a venerable Welch divine, Walter Cradock.

appointed him to that office. The praise of learning he certainly deserved; and if his judgment and moderation bore any proportion to his mental attainments, he may have been useful in that station; and though he himself was not a model, he may have given good instruction to his scholars. A whetstone may sharpen a sword. The Doctor's academical labours continued to the year 1712, which was the year of his death. His successor, Dr. Ridgley, will demand our notice in the second period of the work.

Besides those seminaries which continued their existence into the second period of the history, there is a second class, which had their origin in this period, but the first tutors lived into the next. Of these a particular account is reserved to the succeeding period of our work.

The city of Exeter, famous at this time for the number and zeal of its dissenting inhabitants, contained a seminary, under the tuition of Joseph Hallett, one of their ministers.

John Moore, of Bridgwater, and a gentleman nearly of the same name, John Moor, at Tiverton, were both dissenting ministers, whose academies began at this time, but continued beyond the limits of the first period.

John Short, the son of Ames Short, a non-conformist minister kept an academy at Colyton, in Devon, till the year 1698, when he was called to succeed the Rev. Matthew Barker, in London. His place as a tutor and minister was filled by Matthew Towgood, who survived long after the conclusion of this period.

An academy of the highest character was kept, first

at Gloucester and afterwards at Tewkesbury, by the Rev. Samuel Jones, but his useful life was happily continued beyond the limits of the present time.

The Rev. Joseph Porter, who taught academical learning at Alcester, in Warwickshire, outlived the house of Stuart.

The Rev. Julius Saunders, of Bedworth, in the same county, began the work of tuition at this time, but is to be numbered among the dissenting tutors of the next period.

There is a third class of seminaries, the whole of whose existence was within the limits of this division of our work, but which had several tutors to conduct their business. Manchester, Coventry, and London, furnish instances of this kind.

Henry Newcome, M.A., educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, first rector of Gourworth, in Cheshire, and afterwards called to Manchester, is to be ranked among the dissenting tutors of this period. He was ejected from his living in the year 1662, but continued among his people, and officiated to them in private. As soon as the times permitted, they erected a large meeting-house, and he exercised the pastoral office among them to the day of his death.

By the friends of religion he was considered as the glory of Lancashire. His talents for preaching were of the first class. He possessed a charm by which he fixed attention so closely, and inspired such delight, that his hearers were sorry when he sat down. This talent, so precious in itself, was rendered still more valuable by an extraordinary application to study. Some persons entrusted with this gift of impressive

eloquence consider study needless. Their hearers are charmed, but they are not edified. Henry Newcome took the way to edify his congregation, as well as to delight them. Eminent for amiableness of disposition, for candour, for humility, and moderation, he lived to the age of sixty-eight, useful and highly respected by persons of every class, and finished his earthly course in the year 1695*.

His successor was John Chorlton, who, after going through a course of academical studies under Mr. Frankland, was called to his native place to assist Mr. Newcome in his labours. Numerous are the advantages which such a situation furnishes to a young man who knows how to improve them. Mr. Chorlton survived his venerable predecessor only ten years, and was called away from his labours, in the year 1705, in the fortieth year of his age. Mathew Henry, who calls him his beloved friend and correspondent for sixteen years, delineates his character in the following words: "He was eminent for solid judgment, great thought, an extraordinary quickness and readiness of expression; a casuist, one of a thousand; a wonderfully clear head, and one that did *dominari in concionibus*; of great sincerity and serious piety, and who has been very useful in educating youth." How well qualified he was for the office of a tutor, Mr. Henry's account of him abun-

* The late Archbishop of Armagh was, it is said, descended from him. Had that respectable prelate possessed the religious sentiments, and the ardent zeal of his progenitor, he would have been more instructive as a theological writer, and a thousand times more useful to Ireland as its primate.

dantly proves. With the assistance which Mr. Newcome rendered both to master and scholars, the advantages in this seminary must have been considerable.

In the five last years of his life, Mr. Chorlton was assisted by James Coningham, M. A., who received his education in the university of Edinburgh. He was first settled at Penrith, in Cumberland. His ministerial labours were crowned with success; and he there entered on the office of a tutor. Being called to Manchester, in the year 1700, he took part of his colleague's labours, both in the pulpit and in the professor's chair. His situation became, on the death of Mr. Chorlton, uncomfortable. The enemies of the Dissenters were numerous and bitter; he was prosecuted for instructing youth in academical learning; and there was a want of harmony in his flock. Some, who, under the shadow of another, appear with respectability, have neither the prudence, nor the energy of character, which are necessary to enable them to stand alone. For six years, Mr. Coningham struggled with these difficulties, to the manifest injury of his peace of mind and bodily health. When he removed from Manchester, the academy is supposed to have been dissolved.

He was invited to London, to succeed Mr. Stretton, at Haberdasher's Hall, and spent the last four years of his life with that congregation, in affectionate union. Dying in September, 1716, his funeral sermon was preached by Mr. S. Wright, who, in addition to the circumstances already mentioned, says, "If we consider Mr. Coningham as a preacher, how well-furnished was

his mind with what might both please and profit! How serious was his spirit, and how thoroughly affected with the things he spoke to others! How becoming the pulpit was his countenance, and how graceful his appearance! How grave his deportment, and how well chosen his words and expressions! If we consider him in prayer, he was a very skilful intercessor with Almighty God. If we consider his conversation, he was one that gave abundant proof of his loving our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity, and being concerned for promoting a work of grace in the souls of men." Had there never been a tutor without these qualifications, there would be more religion in the world than now exists.

Coventry was the seat of a dissenting academy. When the Act of Uniformity received the royal assent, Dr. John Bryan, Dr. Obadiah Grew, and Mr. Samuel Bassnet, were ministering to the Dissenters of that town. Their exclusion from the establishment excited general regret. They rendered some assistance in training up young men for the ministry.

Dr. Bryan was the acquaintance and friend of all the pious people in his own and the neighbouring counties, and was esteemed above his brethren. Dr. Calamy says, that "many came forth from his house into the ministry." Though some of these might be before the restoration, it is more than probable some of them were subsequent to that event. He died in the year 1675.

The excellencies of Dr. Grew were of a different kind. Less active than his colleague, he was a calm, sedate divine, but able and faithful in the ministry.

He too assisted in academical labours. His death was in the year 1689.

Thomas Shewell, M.A., who had been ejected from Lenham, in Kent, succeeded Dr. Grew, and continued the academy. But he lived only to the year 1693.

Dr. Joshua Oldfield commenced here his labours, which were more open, more extensive, and more regular, than those of his predecessor. Persecution occasioned him much expense, vexation, and sorrow. She came from the bishop's court, and, after she had tormented him there, and pursued him into the civil courts, he was at last delivered from her fangs, in consequence, it is supposed, of a rebuke from good King William, who intimated to the prelate that he was not pleased with such prosecutions.

That country is in a degraded and miserable state indeed, in which the power of instructing youth depends on a licence from a priest, who may give or withhold it, according to his pleasure. To the plea, that such a precaution is necessary for the security of the government, all history gives the lie. Where can an example be found, of a nation, which had been treated liberally, and allowed, without interference of government, to prosecute their plans of literature and science, rising up against their rulers? It will be easy to furnish many, where the iron hands of spiritual and civil tyranny have become insupportable to the people, who have risen up in despair and indignation, and broken their chains over the heads of their oppressors.

Dr. Oldfield was assisted in his academical instructions by Mr. Tong, who was his fellow-labourer in the ministry. They were both men of superior abilities

and learning, and of eminent goodness. About the year 1700, Dr. Oldfield, and, soon afterwards, Mr. Tong, were called to London. The academy then ceased, or rather was transferred, by Dr. Oldfield, to the capital.

Newington Green, near London, was, during this period, the favourite seat of the dissenting muses. Charles Morton, M.A., fixed his academy here. He was educated at Wadham College, Oxford, and afterwards presented to the rectory of Blisland, in Cornwall. His father had been minister there, but, for his puritanism, was forced to leave it in the days of Charles I. The son, on the contrary, was strenuous for the ceremonies, and, in all things, a zealous conformist. When the civil wars commenced, he was astonished to see the vicious and the debauched all flock to the standard of the king, while the mass of the sober and serious part of the nation ranged themselves under the banners of the parliament. This led him to examine the subject, and the result was, that the keen prelatist became a strict Puritan. These principles forced him out of the establishment, in the year 1662, along with the two thousand.

After the fire of London, in which he was a sufferer, he left his retreat in Cornwall, and went to the metropolis, to attend to some temporal affairs. As he was known to have been, from his youth, a hard student, and to have made eminent attainments, his friends earnestly pressed him to undertake the office of a theological tutor. He complied, and was engaged in the work almost twenty years; during which time he trained up many valuable men for the dissenting ministry. He is to be enrolled among our tutors of the

first class, both for the extent of his literature, and for a peculiar felicity in engaging the affections of his students, in inspiring them with the love of learning, and in rendering subjects plain which others made difficult. Dr. Calamy has happily preserved a paper of rules which he drew up for the use of his students: they do him great honour, and, if attended to, must have done them much good*. He also composed for them brief systems of the several sciences, which he enlarged on, and fully explained in his lectures.

In those days, when it was much safer to be a malefactor than a Dissenter, he was harassed by spies, by informers, by justices of peace, and by prosecutions. Wearied out with a long succession of such vexations, and seeing no end of trouble, he bade adieu, in 1685, to his native country, and sought a sanctuary in New England. He was chosen pastor of the church at Charleston, and died at the advanced age of fourscore years.

When a minister's personal safety is not peculiarly endangered, he should not be forward to leave his native land in times of persecution. While there are private Christians to attend to, and hope of better days, it is generally his duty to abide amidst the storm. There are cases when both pastors and their flocks are obliged to go into exile for the sake of the Gospel; but it is necessary to examine well that it be not without necessity. Three years more, and these not full of suffering, would have secured to Mr. Morton an old age of usefulness and comfort in the bosom of his friends. It is dangerous to permit the mind to be intoxicated

* Calamy's Continuation, p. 198—210.

with the fumes of a disordered imagination, and then to persuade itself that there is nothing but evil in the place or country where we reside, and nothing but pleasures or comforts in regions which are remote. Many have suffered bitterly for giving way to such ideas.

On the departure of Mr. Morton, Stephen Lobb, William Wickens, and Francis Glasscock, agreed to read lectures privately to Mr. Morton's students, and to others.

Stephen Lobb was pastor of an Independent church in Fetter Lane, which still subsists in a flourishing state. He received a liberal education, and entered into the ministry, in the dark days of Charles II., when a Nonconformist could have none but spiritual motives to influence him in his choice. He settled with his flock, in the year 1681, and continued to labour among them, with activity and zeal, till his decease, eighteen years after. Dining at the house of a friend, he was seized at table with a fit, and expired in the course of the day. He was a great favourite of James II., and has suffered the severest censure for carrying up to him an address of thanks for the indulgence which he granted to the Dissenters. But if Mr. Lobb could have prevailed, as he wished, to obtain the repeal of the tests, would it merit condemnation to have prevented the profanation of the sacrament?

William Wickens, educated at Emanuel College, Cambridge, and afterwards a minister in London, till the Act of Conformity thrust him from his field of labour, took a part in this work of tuition. He was a hard student all his days, and had attained such a

measure of Oriental learning as was equalled by few. The originals of the Old and New Testaments were so familiar to him, that he scarcely ever made use of a translation. He was a master in the Jewish antiquities, a branch of study of far more importance for a minister than is usually conceived. Without it, no one is qualified to be an expositor of the sacred writings. He preached to a congregation of Dissenters at Newington-green, till near his death in the year 1699, when he was in the eighty-fifth year of his age.

The third assistant was Francis Glasscock, who received his education in one of the universities in North Britain; and, in the latter part of the reign of Charles II., was chosen pastor of a congregation which met in Drury Lane, and afterwards removed to Hanover Street, Long Acre. His talents, his learning, his piety, and his soundness in the faith, which procured for him, though a Presbyterian, a place in the Pinner's Hall lecture, are spoken of by his contemporaries in a most respectful manner. He died in the year 1706.

There was another seminary on Newington Green, under the tuition of the celebrated Theophilus Gale, M.A., whose "Court of the Gentiles" proves his learning. He was a native of Devonshire, a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and a distinguished tutor there. Chosen, in the year 1657, to be a stated preacher at Winchester cathedral, he was held in high estimation for the excellence of his discourses and the purity of his life.

The restoration having stripped him of his preferments, he travelled with two sons of Lord Wharton.

On his return to England, as he approached London, he was alarmed with the sight of the city in flames. Amidst sympathy for the sufferings of others, the fear of personal loss rushed into his mind. He had left his papers in the possession of a friend, whose house he soon found to be involved in the general calamity. But he was delighted with the grateful tidings that his desk, containing the labours of many years, had been thrown into a cart, as an article just sufficient to make up the load. To this circumstance the world is indebted for the publication of his learned work.

Soon afterwards, he appears to have been employed in assisting John Rowe, M.A., who, in the days of the commonwealth, was pastor of an Independent church which met for worship in Westminster Abbey: but the return of royalty obliged him to seek a more humble temple, which his people found first in Bartholomew Close, and afterwards at Haberdashers' Hall. When Mr. Rowe died, Mr. Gale became his successor. His superior attainments in learning, united with exemplary piety, eminently qualifying him for the office of a theological professor, he was happily influenced to engage in that work, in which he continued till death removed him, in his fiftieth year.

His will was that of a man of letters, and of piety, who had none nearly related to him. All his real and personal estate he left for the education of promising young men, under the management of his nonconforming brethren. He bequeathed his library to Harvard College, in New England, except the philosophical books, which he reserved for students at home. How essential a service might many gentlemen, among the

Dissenters, who know that their libraries will fall into the hands of those who disregard them, or who cannot make use of them, render to the cause of piety and learning in their denominations, were they to leave a part, or the whole, of their books to the theological seminaries.

Thomas Rowe, the son of John, the Independent preacher of Westminster Abbey, succeeded Theophilus Gale, in the congregation, and in the academy. He proved an able tutor, and the seminary, under his tuition, was in a flourishing state. To considerable learning, he united a most amiable disposition: his students loved him; for he rendered the path of knowledge easy.

In the year 1706, as he was riding in the streets of London, he was seized with a fit, fell from his horse, and immediately expired, in the forty-ninth year of his age. He had the honour of educating many men of note in the literary world. John Hughes, the poet, and Josiah Hort, Archbishop of Tuam, were among his students: but to have educated Dr. Watts entitles him to greater celebrity.

Thomas Doolittle, M.A., belongs to this class of dissenting tutors. Kidderminster was the place of his nativity; and he had the happiness of sitting under the instructive and powerful ministry of Mr. Baxter, whose discourses "On the Saints' Rest" were the means of Mr. Doolittle's conversion. At the recommendation of Baxter, his young convert went to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. When he came to London, his lively, pungent preaching engaged attention, and he was

chosen to the pastoral office in the church of St. Alphage, London Wall. After nine years of zealous labour, which it pleased God to crown with great success, the Act of Uniformity imposed silence on this faithful minister of Christ. Being forbidden to preach, he appears to have taught a school; and when the plague commenced, he retired, by the advice of friends, into the country with his scholars. On returning to town, when the plague had ceased, having counted the cost, he began to preach at a place, which he fitted up, in Bunhill Fields; and from thence removed to a meeting-house which he built in Monkwell Street. After various troubles and vexations, he had his place licensed, and preached the Gospel to a numerous audience. He likewise set up an academy at Islington, to prepare young men for the dissenting ministry. He met with great encouragement, till persecution drove him from his habitation, and scattered his students.

In consequence of the Oxford Act, he removed to Wimbledon, and afterwards to Battersea. His pupils boarded in the neighbouring villages, and came by stealth to attend the lectures. While he lived at Battersea, his goods were seized and sold. The Act of Toleration enabled Mr. Doolittle, without further molestation, to pursue the delightful labours of a pastor and a tutor. The academy is supposed to have been dissolved when the infirmities of years came upon him. He continued in the ministry, with exemplary diligence, till his death. Scarcely a minister in London was more successful; for he took great delight in catechising, and the youth of his flock reaped the benefit of his catechetical instructions. He died, in great peace

and consolation, in the year 1708, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. The works of this last of the Non-conformist ministers who were ejected from the city of London were numerous and useful.

Mr. Doolittle was assisted in his seminary by Thomas Vincent, a graduate of Christchurch, Oxford, ejected from the living of St. Mary Magdalen, Milk Street. When he found that the plague was extending its ravages in the city, he determined to leave his present employment for a season, and devote himself to the service of the afflicted. Mr. Doolittle having, in vain, endeavoured to dissuade him, it was agreed to consult the most eminent ministers in the neighbourhood. After Mr. Doolittle's reasons had been heard, Mr. Vincent acquainted his brethren, "that he had very seriously considered the matter, before he had come to such a resolution. He had carefully examined the state of his own soul, and could look death in the face with comfort. He thought it absolutely necessary, that such numbers of dying people should have some spiritual assistance. He could have no prospect of usefulness in the exercise of his ministry, through his whole life, like that which now offered itself. He had often committed the case and himself to God in prayer; and, upon the whole, had solemnly devoted himself to the service of God and souls upon this occasion, and therefore hoped none of them would endeavour to weaken his hands in the work." When the ministers present had heard his reasons, they unanimously expressed their satisfaction and joy, and their persuasion that the matter was of God; and concurred in their prayers for his protection and success. He went out to his work with the greatest firmness

and magnanimity. He constantly preached, every Lord's-day, in some parish church. His subjects were the most moving and important; and his management of them, the most pathetic and searching. The present judgment gave a peculiar edge to every sermon. Multitudes followed him wherever he went; he visited all that sent for him, without fear, and did the best he could to save their souls from death*.

The world has its heroes, whom it holds up to universal admiration in the page of history. Here the church of Christ presents to us one of hers. The world calls us to admire those who advance with tranquillity of mind, with firmness of step, and determination to conquer, or to die. But here was a man, who saw the inhabitants of a city, from which he had been cast out as unworthy of the name of a minister of Christ, dying by pestilence, and could not be restrained from rushing into the midst of them to rescue their immortal souls from eternal misery. From pulpits, for entering which the law of the land doomed him to a dungeon, a stronger law, the law of love to God and man, constrained him to publish the mercy of the Gospel, to souls on the brink of eternity. He went into the house of pestilence, and the chambers of mortal disease, wherever the voice of misery invited him. His exhortations, his counsels, and his prayers, were at every one's call; and they flowed from a compassionate heart, tenderly sympathising in their distress, and burning with zeal for their salvation. Great was the success of his labours; for during the plague a harvest of souls was reaped, exceeding the results of many a long life of zeal.

* Calamy's Continuation, p. 30—84.

Facts like these are the glory and beauty of ecclesiastical history. While the man of taste selects his beautiful passages from historians, orators, and poets, and pores over them with transport, the admirer of spiritual beauty will mark down this page of moral heroism, and read it, and read it again, with admiration, and delight. One leaf of such writing is worth more than volumes of the disputes of ambitious prelates. As long as Christ has on earth a Church, animated with zeal for the glory of his name, Thomas Vincent will live. His writings breathe the most affectionate ardour for the salvation of immortal souls; they savour of the minister who, for months, preached to congregations infected with the plague*.

When the plague ceased, he was compelled to retire, and give place to the conforming clergy, nearly all of whom it had chased away. It was well for Vincent that the law did not lay hold of him, and punish him for his deeds.

Mr. Vincent afterwards preached to a numerous congregation of Dissenters in London, till his death, which happened in the year 1678.

Besides these tutors, who laboured in conjunction with colleagues or assistants, there was another class, consisting of persons who performed the whole duty themselves; and whose academies terminated with their leisure or their life. Most of them were original Non-conformists, but some were persons who

* His example was followed by his non-conforming brethren, Messrs. Chester, Janeway, Turner, Grimes, Franklin, and some others. Drs. Walker, Horton, and Meriton, and a few others of the conforming clergy, remained at their post, but the generality fled.

had been trained up in Dissenting academies, or in other seats of learning.

John Shuttlewood, A.B. of Christ's College, Cambridge, was ejected from Raunston and Hoose, in Leicestershire. He was a very considerable sufferer for his Non-conformity. Fines, imprisonments, and loss of goods, were more than once his lot. Pursued by the fury of the agents for conformity, he was compelled to change his habitation, and remove from place to place, in order to escape their hands. But he persevered in doing good; and to his labours in the ministry of the word, united the duties of the tutor of an academy. It was kept chiefly at Sulby, in Northamptonshire, and if we may judge of the number of his students from a memorandum, "that six entered in one year," it was considerable.

He was greatly esteemed by the disciples of Christ in all the country around. His constitution, though robust, was prematurely worn out with sufferings, and he died in the year 1688, at the age of fifty-eight. Job Orton, half a century afterwards, informs us, that his name was still precious among the Christians at Sulby. "The memory of the just shall be blessed."

One of the earliest tutors was Thomas Cole, M.A., who was educated at Westminster school, and from thence elected student of Christchurch, Oxford. Appointed principal of St. Mary's Hall, his celebrity as a college tutor was considerable; and, besides other pupils, he could boast of John Locke, whose instructor enjoyed no common honour. Cast out of the university, at the Restoration, he retired to Nettlebed, in Oxford-

shire, and there pursued his former employment, by instructing young men in liberal sciences and in theology. His station in the university is a sufficient voucher for his learning; and men, who knew him well at different periods of his life, speak in the highest terms of his piety. In his village seminary, many were trained up by him, as well for civil employments as for the Christian ministry.

From Nettlebed, he was called to the charge of a large congregation in London, and ministered to them till his death, in 1697. He was chosen one of the lecturers at Pinner's Hall, and took an active part in what was called the Neonomian controversy. His last illness was an eminent display of devotion and comfort. He left behind him various writings, which attest his soundness in the faith, and intimate acquaintance with the doctrines of the Gospel.

John Woodhouse is mentioned among the dissenting tutors in this period. After going through a course of studies in the university, he was employed as chaplain to a family of note, in the county of Nottingham. While Mr. Woodhouse was in this situation, the Act of Uniformity passed, and he found himself unable to take his station in the established church. On leaving the family, of which he was the domestic minister, he settled at Sherrif Hales, in Shropshire, not only as a preacher, but as a dissenting tutor. If we are allowed to judge of him from the proficiency of his scholars, he will stand high; for he sent forth many excellent ministers, and some useful characters were formed for important stations in civil life.

Religion had, from his youth, been the great business

of his life. As he advanced in years, he grew in grace, and became a man of superior sanctity and devotedness to God. His great care, respecting his theological students, was that of which he made the greatest account himself, namely, “ a faithful, diligent aim at usefulness, and saving immortal souls. He thought the best way to effect this was a plain, warm, familiar manner of preaching. He therefore chiefly regarded the frame of his own heart in his work, as what suggested the most moving words; and whence, by the Divine blessing, he expected the greatest success*.”

Of fines and imprisonments, the lot of dissenting ministers in that day, he had his share, but he persevered in his labours, animated by love to God, and love to man. In possession of an ample fortune, he felt the obligations which lay upon him to be useful, and he considered his talents as given to be improved. He educated several students entirely at his own expense, and was liberal towards those of his brethren who stood in need of relief. On the death of Dr. Annesly, in the year 1696, Mr. Woodhouse was called to be pastor of the church in Little St. Helen's, London. In the year 1700, he ended his mortal course, in the exercise of faith, resignation, and hope. He had been assisted in his academy by Mr. Southwell, who, after Mr. Woodhouse's departure, settled at Dudley, and instructed a few pupils, and from thence removed to Newbury.

Samuel Cradock, B.D., kept his academy at Wick-

* Williams's Works, vol. ii. Funeral Sermon for Mr. Woodhouse.

hambrook, in Suffolk. He was Fellow of Emanuel College, Cambridge, which presented him to the valuable rectory of North Cadbury, in Somersetshire. The Act of Uniformity having stripped him of his living, he cast himself on the providence of God, and his wants were amply supplied. The death of a relative put him in possession of a good estate at Wickhambrook, in Suffolk, where he resided for the space of six and twenty years. In his college, he was a celebrated tutor; in his parish, an able and faithful preacher of the Gospel; and in the press, a writer of superior worth.

Though he might have passed the latter part of life at his ease, in the character and habits of a country squire, disdaining to wear out his years in unprofitable indolence, or in the inferior cares of an estate, he sought by what means he might do all possible good to his own, and to each succeeding age. With this view he resumed all his former employments. His house being open to all who would come, he preached the Gospel to them freely and constantly, besides teaching the various parts of learning which he had formerly taught at Cambridge. Dr. Calamy studied here for two years, and chiefly applied himself to logic, metaphysics, and natural and moral philosophy. From his account it appears that Mr. Cradock had then about twenty students, and these almost equally divided between theology, and the sciences which qualify for the pursuits of civil life. He speaks in the highest terms of his literary character, and of the candour and goodness of his conduct as a tutor. His books bear equal testimony to his learning and his piety. His "Knowledge and Practice," which he pub-

lished at Cadbury, and afterwards enlarged to a folio volume, is one of the best systems of divinity which a plain man can read. He afterwards added "The Harmony of the Evangelists," in the year 1672, and "The Old Testament History Methodised," eleven years afterwards. He had previously published "The Apostolical History." Each of these works discovers extensive knowledge, a sound judgment, and an intimate acquaintance with the sacred writings. In the year 1692, he published a brief exposition of the Revelation.

The last ten years of his life he spent as pastor of a church at Bishop Stortford, where he died in the year 1706, in the eighty-sixth year of his age.

Ralph Button, another ejected minister, was tutor of an academy at Islington. He was educated at Exeter College, Oxford, and afterwards became a Fellow and Tutor of Merton. When the parliament seized Oxford, and the regulation of its university, Mr. Button was appointed orator of the university, and canon of Christchurch. It was common for men in such offices to be invested with the highest honorary degrees; but Anthony Wood says, that Mr. Button being about to be married at the time, was unwilling to incur the expense, and therefore did not apply, along with Thomas Goodwin, and some others, but remained all his days with the humble epithet of A.M. Who would not prefer an amiable spouse, and the comforts of matrimony, to the title of D.D.?

The restoration deprived him of all his university honours and emoluments. Retiring to Brentford, he

educated the sons of two knights in the neighbourhood, for which crime he suffered six months' imprisonment. When the times became more favourable, he opened an academy at Islington, and trained up many young persons, both for the dissenting ministry, and for secular employments. Sir Joseph Jekyll, who rose to some of the highest offices in the law, and made so conspicuous a figure in the political world, after the revolution, was one of Mr. Button's students. Mr. Baxter, an accurate judge of men, says, "he was an excellent scholar, and, what is better, a most humble, worthy, godly man, of a plain, sincere heart, and blameless." In the year 1680 he died.

Edward Veal, M. A., was another of the London tutors, during this period. His education for the ministry he received at Christchurch, Oxford. He afterwards went over to Dublin, and became a senior fellow of Trinity College. Returning to England for ordination, which he obtained from a presbytery in Lancashire, he visited Ireland a second time, and exercised his ministry there for several years. The return of episcopacy stripped him of his fellowship; and he came back to his native country. The Act of Uniformity soon following, he gathered a dissenting congregation in Wapping, and continued to preach to them, till the infirmities of years compelled him to resign his charge. Having, while in the university, acquired celebrity as a tutor, he became the professor of a dissenting academy, and trained up some very respectable and excellent ministers. He died in the year 1708, at the age of seventy-seven. His funeral sermon, by his

successor, Mr. Simmonds, is said to have been, for the sake of convenience, preached in the parish church at Wapping.

These all ranked among those honourable men who suffered an expulsion from the Church of England; but there were others who, having received their education under the earliest Non-conformist tutors, or at foreign seats of learning, rendered essential service to the dissenting cause, by the instruction of youth for the ministry of the Gospel. Of this number was Benjamin Robinson. He was educated under Mr. Woodhouse, at Sherrif Hales. After he left the academy, he resided, for some years, as a chaplain in two families of rank, and preached in the country around with distinguished zeal and eminent success. In 1688, he settled at Finnerden, in Derbyshire. He was there grievously harassed by the spiritual court. It is not a little to his honour, that he attracted the notice of the great Mr. Howe, who entertained a peculiar affection for him, and who, from what he observed of his talents and his temper, formed great expectations of his superior usefulness. By his counsel, Mr. Robinson accepted the call to a church at Hungerford, in Berkshire, where he remained for seven years; and, in the year 1696, undertook the education of young men for the ministry. For this office he was qualified by talents of the first order, extensive reading, a quickness of conception (which led one to say, “that he could do as much in an hour, as another man could in a day”), an accurate knowledge of the sacred writings, and an entire devotedness to God. His success is said to have corresponded with

his powers. On the death of Mr. Woodhouse, he removed to London, and laboured with faithfulness in the work of the ministry, till the year 1722, when he died.

While he resided in Berkshire, particular notice was taken of his zeal for the improvement of younger ministers. It was his aim to inspire them with proper sentiments and dispositions, to allure them to habits of vigorous application to study, and to rouse them to earnest and persevering exertions in their Master's cause. It may, perhaps, be questioned, whether ministers, venerable for their years and other excellencies, are sufficiently sensible of all the good which they might do to their junior brethren, and of their obligations to do it. On the other hand, how highly ought younger ministers to prize counsels, the result of long, and often dearly-bought, experience! That petulance, which will lead any to despise and reject such instructions, demonstrates the young man's utter unfitness for the ministry of the Gospel*.

John Payne, who was pastor of a church at Saffron Waldon, presided over a seminary there. This friend of Dr. Owen visited him on his death-bed, and was entrusted with the publication of his Meditations on the Glory of Christ. He flourished in the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. Dr. Guyse and Mr. Rawlin were educated under him, and some other distinguished Independent ministers.

Pinner, in Middlesex, was the seat of an academy, kept by Thomas Goodwin, the dissenting minister of

* Robinson's Funeral Sermon and Life, by Cumming.

the place. His father, Dr. Thomas Goodwin, was known as one of the five Independent ministers in the assembly at Westminster, and as president of Magdalene College, Oxford, in the days of the commonwealth. His son received the first part of his education in England, and the last in Holland. He was engaged, along with three other young ministers, in carrying on an evening lecture at a coffee-house in London, which was supported and attended by some of the first merchants. In the year 1683, he made the tour of Europe, in company with Mr. Shower and some other gentlemen. Two years after, he was chosen to assist Mr. Stephen Lobb, after whose death, he removed to Pinner. To the pastoral office, he, for many years, added the function of a theological tutor. He is commended by Dr. Calamy, as “ a person of great and universal literature, and of a most gentle and obliging temper, and who lived usefully upon his estate *.”

John Kerr, who was a native of Scotland, after having studied in one of its universities, completed his education at Leyden, and took the degree of M.D. He came to London, and engaged in the instruction of young men for the ministry. Dr. Calamy, who was personally acquainted with him, says, “ that he was a gentleman of considerable learning, and celebrated as a tutor, having trained up a number of persons who have been, and still are, very useful in the world.” The seat of his academy was first at Highgate, and afterwards at Clerkenwell. He appears to have been a tutor some time before the end of the seventeenth century.

* Calamy's Continuation, p. 96.

There were others, who either occasionally superintended the instruction of individuals, or prepared them for regular seminaries, or completed their education. Their labours entitle them to remembrance.

The excellent John Flavel, B. A., of Dartmouth, trained up four young men for the ministry; and to one of them, who was poor, besides a free education, which was given to them all, he added maintenance at his own expense. Edward Reyner, M. A., of Lincoln, one of the most eminent ministers of his day, gave, after his ejection, a portion of his time to the instruction of young men for the dissenting ministry; but the extent of his labours cannot now be ascertained. John Whitlock and Edward Reynolds, both ejected ministers of Nottingham, who lived, for more than fifty years, in affection superior to that of brothers, and always under the same roof, applied some part of their leisure to this important service. Mr. Hardy is mentioned as an instructor of youth in the same town. Henry Hickman, B. D., deprived of a fellowship, settled, after a time, near Stourbridge, where, says Dr. Calamy, "he took pupils, and read lectures in logic and philosophy." Philip Henry, who superintended the education of his own children and of the sons of some neighbouring gentlemen, used to have a young person, designed for the ministry, to assist him; and was helpful to several of them, in succession, by communicating to them the rudiments of academical learning.

Instruction for the ministry, among the Dissenters, which was communicated so extensively in England, was carried into Wales too.

Samuel Jones, M.A., fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, and for several years a tutor there, was ejected, by the Act of Uniformity, from the living of Llangynwydd, in Glamorganshire. He recommended himself so well to the nobility and gentry in the neighbourhood, as to be entrusted with the education of their sons. He had likewise a number of divinity students, whom he prepared for the dissenting ministry. He was master of the Greek and Latin tongues, a good orientalist, an adept in philosophy, a skilful casuist, well read in modern controversies, and an acceptable and very useful preacher. A most humble, affectionate, and peaceful disposition was crowned with consummate prudence. The distressing pains of the stone called forth the exercise of faith and patience. The year before his death, which was in 1697, a report being circulated, that he had conformed, he was anxious to contradict it, and to assert his perseverance in dissent, and his full persuasion of the goodness of the principles on which he acted in his nonconformity*.

* In a letter to a friend, he expresses himself thus:—"I declare to you and all the world, as in the words of a dying man, that I had not (at the time referred to), and have not since, the least check in my conscience for my non-submission to these impositions which were then made the indispensable terms of communion with the Church of England. I confess that I had then, and have still, a very honourable respect for the able and conscientious ministers of it. But, to declare my unfeigned assent and consent, and to deny my former ordination, to swallow several oaths, and to crouch under the burden of several impositions, were such blocks which the law had laid at the church-door, that, upon mature consideration, I could not, durst not then, and dare not now, leap over, though to save my credit and livelihood, though to gain dignity and preferment, without odious hypocrisy, and the overthrowing of my inward peace, which is, and ought to be, dearer to me than my very life. To this choice I was then led, not by the examples of other leading men, nor with any design that others should be led by mine. This is the living testimony of, Sir, your dying friend, S. J."—Calamy, vol. ii., pp. 721, 722.

Mr. Stephen Hughes, of Carmarthen ; Mr. Samuel Jones, of Brynlllywarch ; Hugh Owen, of Montgomeryshire ; Marmaduke Matthews, of Swansea ; Peregrine Philips, of Haverfordwest ; and a few others, who, though not regular tutors, occasionally assisted in preparing young men, of talents and piety, for the service of the sanctuary, deserve a more detailed notice, but, for want of earlier attention to the subject, names, which deserve to be enrolled in our list, are irrecoverably lost, though they are inscribed in a more durable record.

SECT. III.—*Method of Education in the Dissenting Seminaries.*

FOR more than half a century after the Act of Uniformity was enforced, a comprehension was expected, with such alterations in the services of the church, that the greater part of the dissenting ministers might be admitted within her pale. A university education was not then considered indispensable ; and persons taught in dissenting seminaries found a ready entrance into the church.

In the dissenting academies of that period, the sons of the most respectable gentry, and of some of the nobility, were educated. One of Mr. Frankland's first scholars was a son of Sir Thomas Liddel, and one half of Mr. Cradock's students were the sons of the landed gentlemen in the neighbourhood. When the Schism Bill was debating in the Upper House, Lord Wharton

reproached Harley, Earl of Oxford, with its severity, and asked him if he thought this was the reward due to those very tutors from whom he received the education which made him so great a man.

A considerable number of moderate and respectable laymen did not enter into the feelings of the clergy; but thought the treatment of the Non-conformist ministers covered their enemies with disgrace. These gentlemen conceived that their children could not be placed in a situation more favourable to knowledge and virtue, than in the hands of the dissenting tutors; and that from them they might receive the advantages of a liberal education, without being exposed to the temptations of the universities.

As by the oaths required at Oxford and Cambridge, the Dissenters were excluded from their literary advantages, it would have been but a small degree of indulgence to allow them peaceably to enjoy the benefit of their newly-formed academies, and to be instructed there without envy or molestation. But such forbearance did not accord with the intolerant, haughty spirit of that age.

In addition to violence, the enemy struck at the moral character of the tutors, and endeavoured to brand them with the crime of perjury. In ancient times, a succession of riots, and brawls, and fightings, having disgusted some members of the universities, they fixed their abode at Stamford, and began, with considerable success, to form an Athens there, and to dispense degrees as in the old seats of learning. Oxford and Cambridge, in alarm, courted the return of

its members. To prevent a similar evil in future, both universities framed an oath, which remains to the present day, by which every graduate is obliged to swear, that he will not at Stamford, or any where in England, resume, or begin (*lectiones suas solenniter*), or receive, or confer a degree, as in an university*. This was now applied to the Non-conformists, and brought forward against the instructors of their youth. By keeping private academies, they were said to have broken their oaths, and to have polluted their souls with the stains of perjury. In the present day, when ancient institutions, and university statutes, which boast an existence of five hundred years, are treated with no greater veneration than they can claim from their intrinsic worth, the objection, if adduced, would be thought unworthy of an answer. To view the oath in the most favourable light, it is reprehensible, because it is useless; and the multiplication of oaths without cause is to be blamed. If it be designed, as it originally appears to have been, to oppose the erection of another university, that depends not on the professors of Oxford and Cambridge, but on the British legislature, which, if it chose, would establish two more, and which would consider this oath as a feeble barrier to its authority, and as a rude attempt to oppose its power. Designed against Dissenters it could not be, because, for centuries afterwards, there were none. But if it be pointed against them it is wicked. They claim no right to confer degrees: no honorary titles did they ever take upon them to give. Their sole aim was to convey useful knowledge. And

* Fuller's Church History.

would the universities, by their oaths, presume to impede the progress of knowledge? Would they prevent a man from teaching his own children, and the children of his friends, those sciences which he has acquired at full expense both of money and of labour?

But what was the mode of instruction in the dissenting seminaries? The tutors having received their education in the universities, and been engaged in the business of tuition in their colleges, naturally adopted the same methods of instruction which were used by themselves before, and which were regularly employed in the universities, as best adapted to the improvement of the studious youth.

The Greek and Latin classics were an important object of attention: logic, metaphysics, natural and moral philosophy, rhetoric, theology, and biblical criticism, appear to have been comprised in the ordinary course of study.

In Mr. Owen's life, there is a list of the books which he used by way of text or syllabus to enlarge on in his lectures to his scholars*. Mr. Cradock is said to have

* In logic, Burgersdicius, Hereboord, Ramus: in metaphysics, Fromenius, Eustachius, Baronius; in physics, Le Clerc, Du Hamel; in geometry, Pardie's Elements, Euclid; in astronomy, Gassendus; in chronology, Strauchius: in ecclesiastical history, Spanhemius; in theology, Wollebius.—Ryssenius's Abstract of Turretine.

Samuel Palmer, the advocate of the dissenting academies, gives us the following account of his tutor's plan of education, and of the employments of the students:—

“It was our custom to have lectures appointed to certain times, and we began the morning with logic: We read Hereboord, which is the same as is generally read at Cambridge. The next superior class read metaphysics, of which Fromenius's Synopsis was our manual, and by directions of our tutor, we were assisted in our chambers by Baronius, Suarez, and Colbert. Ethics was our next study, and our system

drawn up systems on the different sciences for himself, which his students were required to copy for their own use.

Hereboord, in reading which our tutor recommended to our meditation Dr. Henry More, Marcus Antoninus Epictetus, with the comments of Arrian and Simplicius, and the morals of Solomon; and under this head, the moral works of the great Puffendorf. The highest class was engaged in natural philosophy, of which Le Clerc was our system, whom we compared with the ancients and with other moderns, as Aristotle, Des Cartes, Colbert, Staire, &c. We disputed, every other day, in Latin upon the several philosophical controversies; and as these lectures were read off, some time was set apart to introduce rhetoric, in which that short piece of John Gerard Vossius was used in the school, but in our chambers we were assisted by his larger volume, Aristotle, and Tully de Oratore. These exercises were all performed every morning, except that, on Mondays, we added as a divine lecture, some of Buchanan's Psalms, the finest of the kind, both for purity of language, and exact sense of the original; and, on Saturdays, all the superior classes declaimed by turns, four and four, on some noble and useful subject, such as De Pace; *Logicane magis inserviat cæteris disciplinis an Rhetorica*, De connubio virtutis cum doctrina, &c., and I can say, that these orations were, for the most part, of uncommon eloquence, purity of style, and manly and judicious composure.

“After dinner, our work began by reading some one of the Greek or Latin historians, orators, or poets, of which, first I remember Sallust, Quintus Curtius, Justin, and Paterculus; of the second, Demosthenes, Tully, and Isocrates's Select Orations; and of the last, Homer, Virgil, Juvenal, Persius, and Horace. This reading was the finest and most delightful to young gentlemen of all others, because it was not in the pedantic method of common schools; but the delicacy of our tutor's criticisms, his exact description of persons, terms, and places, illustrated by referring to Rosin and other antiquarians, and his just application of the morals, made such a lasting impression, as rendered all our other studies more facile. In geography, we read Dionysii Periegesis compared with Cluverius, which, at this lecture, always lay upon the table.

“Mondays and Fridays, we read divinity, of which the first lecture was always in the Greek Testament, and it was our custom to go through it once a year: we seldom read less than six or seven chapters, and this was done with the greatest accuracy. We were obliged to give the most curious etymons, and were assisted with the Synopsis Criticorum, Martinius, Favorinus, and Hesychius's Lexicons, and it was expected that the sacred geography and chronology should be particularly observed and answered too, at demand, of which I never knew my tutor sparing. The other divinity lecture was on Synopsis Purioris Theologiæ, as very accurate and short; we were advised to read by ourselves

One of the fullest accounts of the methods of education in that period, is given by Thomas Secker, a student at the academy of Mr. Jones at Gloucester. As this was sent to Dr. Watts, by Mr. Secker, who, there educated for the ministry among the Dissenters, became afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, his statement will be read with the liveliest interest*.

the more large pieces of Turretine, Theses Salmurienses, Baxter's *Methodus Theologiæ*, and Archbishop Usher's, and, on particular controversies, many excellent authors, as on original sin, Placæus, and Barlow de *Natura Mali*; on grace and free will, Rutherford, Strangius, and Amyraldus; on the Popish controversy, Amesius, Bellarminus *Enervatus*, and the modern disputes during the reign of King James; on Episcopacy, Altare *Damacenum*, Bishop Hall and Mr. Baxter; Bishop Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, Dr. Owen and Rutherford; and for practical divinity, Baxter, Tillotson, Charnock; and in a word, the best books of the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Independent divines, were in their order recommended, and constantly used by those of us who were able to procure them; and all, or most of them, I can affirm were the study of all the pupils.

"I must not pass this over without an observation or two to the honour of my tutor, that I never heard him make one unhandsome reflection on the church of England, and that on all controversial points he never offered to impose on the judgment of his pupils.

"I have not said anything of the affairs of our house and our social conversation, which in the most was unexceptionable. My tutor began the morning with public prayer, in the school, which he performed with great devotion, but not with equal elegance and beauty in English; but in Latin, in which he often prayed, no man could exceed him for exact thought, curious style, and devout pathos.

"At divinity lectures, the eldest pupils prayed; in these I often joined with peculiar delight, and went away with a raised mind. Men of lesser genius were allowed forms of their own composure, or others as they thought proper. Prayer in the family was so esteemed, that I do not know that it was once omitted; and to prevent any disorder, nine o'clock was the latest hour for any person to be abroad. Obscene or profane discourse, if known, would have procured expulsion, and the smallest vanities reproof, which my tutor knew how to give with a just and austere resentment."—pp. 4—7.

* "REV. SIR,

Gloucester, Nov. 18, 1711.

"Before I give you an account of the state of our academy, and those other things you desired me, please to accept of my hearty thanks for that service you have done me, both in advising me to prosecute my

Such was the education of the second generation of dissenting ministers. Whatever depended on the talents and care of the tutor was secured. Those tutors

studied in such an extraordinary place of education, and in procuring me admittance into it. I wish my improvements may be answerable to the advantages I enjoy; but however that may happen, your kindness has fixed me in a place where I may be very happy, and spend my time to good purpose; and where, if I do not, the fault will be all my own.

“ I am sensible how difficult it is to give a character of any person or thing, because the most probable guesses we make very often prove false ones. But since you are pleased to desire it, I think myself obliged to give you the best and most impartial account of matters I can.

“ Mr. Jones, then, I take to be a man of real piety, great learning, and an agreeable temper; and one who is very diligent in instructing all under his care, very well qualified to give instructions, and whose well-managed familiarity will always make him respected. He is very strict in keeping good order, and will effectually preserve his pupils from negligence and immorality. And accordingly, I believe there are not many academies freer in general from those vices, than we are. In particular, my bedfellow, Mr. Scot, is one of unfeigned religion, and a diligent searcher after truth. His genteel carriage and agreeable disposition gain him the esteem of every one. Mr. Griffith is more than ordinary serious and grave, and improves more in every thing than one could expect from a man who seems to be not much under forty; particularly in Greek and Hebrew he has made a great progress. Mr. Francis and Mr. Watkins are diligent in study, and truly religious. The elder Mr. Jones, having had a better education than they, will, in all probability, make a greater scholar; and his brother is one of quick parts.

“ Our logic, which we have read over once, is so contrived as to comprehend all Hereboord, and the greater part of Mr. Locke's Essay, and the Art of Thinking. What Mr. Jones dictated to us was but short, containing a clear and brief account of the matter, references to the places where it was more fully treated of, and remarks on, or explications of the authors cited, when need required. At our next lecture, we gave an account both of what the author quoted and our tutor said, who commonly gave us a larger explication of it, and so proceeded to the next thing in order. He took care, as far as possible, that we understood the sense as well as remembered the words of what we had read, and that we should not suffer ourselves to be cheated with obscure terms which had no meaning. Though he be no great admirer of the old logic, yet he has taken a great deal of pains both in explaining and correcting Hereboord, and has, for the most part, made him intelligible, or shown that he is not so.

“ The two Mr. Jones', Mr. Francis, Mr. Watkins, Mr. Sheldon, and

who became Non-conformists showed themselves to be men of conscience ; and when they were placed at the head of dissenting seminaries, they would be no less attentive to their charge than when within the walls of

two more gentlemen, are to begin Jewish antiquities in a short time. I was designed for one of their number, but rather chose to read logic once more ; both because I was utterly unacquainted with it when I came to this place, and because the others having all, except Mr. Francis, been at other academies, will be obliged to make more haste than those in a lower class, and consequently cannot have so good or large accounts of anything, nor so much time to study every head. We shall have gone through our course in about four years' time, which, I believe, nobody that knows Mr. Jones will think too long.

“ I began to learn Hebrew soon as I came hither, and find myself able now to construe, and give some grammatical account of, about twenty verses in the easier parts of the Bible, after less than an hour's preparation. We read, every day, two verses a-piece in the Hebrew Bible, which we turn into Greek (no one knowing which his verses shall be, though at first it was otherwise), and this, with logic, is our morning's work.

“ Mr. Jones also began, about three months ago, some critical lectures, in order to the exposition you advised him to. The principal things contained in them are about the antiquity of the Hebrew language, letters, vowels, the incorruption of the Scriptures, ancient divisions of the Bible, an account of the Talmud, Masora, and Cabala. We are at present upon the Septuagint, and shall proceed, after that, to Targumim, and other versions, &c. Every part is managed with abundance of perspicuity, and seldom any material thing is omitted that others have said on the point, though very frequently we have useful additions of things which are not to be found in them. We have scarce been upon anything yet, but Mr. Jones has had those writers which are most valued on that head, to which he always refers us. This is what we first set about in the afternoon, which being finished, we read a chapter in the Greek Testament, and after that, mathematics. We have gone through all that is taught of algebra and proportion, with the first six books of Euclid, which is all Mr. Jones designs for the gentlemen I mentioned above, but he intends to read something more to the class that comes after them.

“ This is our daily employment, which, in the morning, takes up about two hours, and something more in the afternoon. Only on Wednesdays, in the morning, we read Dionysius's *Periegesis*, on which we have notes, mostly geographical, but with some criticisms intermixed ; and in the afternoon we have no lecture at all. So, on Saturday, in the afternoon, we have only a thesis, which none but they who have done with logic

their college. Were we to suppose them to be under the influence of inferior considerations, whatever may be conceived to have been lost, as to a spirit of emulation among the tutors there, would be more than compensated by zeal for the prosperity of the new communion; and, in the academies, there was a sufficient number of students to kindle the desire of superior excellence, and excite a spirit to emulate such as were

have any concern in. We are also just beginning to read Isocrates and Terence, each twice a week. On the latter, our tutor will give us some notes, which he received in a college, from Perizonius.

“We are obliged to rise at five of the clock, every morning; and to speak Latin always, except when below stairs amongst the family. The people where we live are very civil, and the greatest inconvenience we suffer, is that we fill the house rather too much, being sixteen in number, besides Mr. Jones. But I suppose the increase of his academy will oblige him to remove, next spring. We pass our time very agreeably, betwixt study and conversation with our tutor, who is always ready to discourse freely of anything that is useful; and allows us, either then, or at lecture, all imaginable liberty of making objections against his opinion, and prosecuting them as far as we can. In this, and everything else, he shows himself so much a gentleman, and manifests so great an affection and tenderness for his pupils, as cannot but command respect and love. I almost forgot to mention our tutor's library, which is composed, for the most part, of foreign books, which seem to be very well chosen, and are every day of great advantage to us.

“Thus I have endeavoured, sir, to give you an account of all I thought material or observable amongst us. As for my own part, I apply myself with what diligence I can to everything which is the subject of our lectures, without preferring one subject before another; because I see nothing we are engaged in, but what is either necessary, or extremely useful, for one who would thoroughly understand those things which most concern him, or be able to explain them well to others. I hope I have not spent my time, since I came to this place, without some small improvement both in human knowledge and that which is far better; and I earnestly desire the benefit of your prayers, that God would be pleased to fit me better for his service, both in this world and the next. This, if you please to afford me, and your advice with relation to study, or whatever else you think convenient, must needs be extremely useful, as well as agreeable, and shall be thankfully received by your most obliged, humble servant,

“T. SECKER.”

more conspicuous for learning. Other means of improvement, which the universities afforded, may not have been retained.

The funds for the support of the dissenting academies during this period, were chiefly derived from the contributions of the parents and friends of the young men who received their education there. Some students were supported by the subscriptions of public-spirited individuals, who were anxious for a succession of useful ministers in the dissenting congregations. These, however, were but few; most defrayed the expenses of their own instruction. It was from the middling class in society that the first race of dissenting students sprang; and most of them enjoyed the advantage of respectable as well as pious connexions.

A longer time was necessary to procure funds for the support of such students as were unable to provide for themselves. But there is always in the church, as well as in civil society, a class of young men who have talents and virtues, but not money; and who, on receiving an education for the ministry, rise in voluntary societies, where patronage is unknown, to the level of their abilities, hold the first place in the communities to which they belong, and are eminently useful in advancing the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom.

An attack on the dissenting seminaries was made by Samuel Wesley, father of the celebrated head of the Arminian Methodists. He had studied under Mr. Morton; and afterwards, renouncing his dissent, sought his fortune in the arms of the establishment. To re-

commend himself more effectually to his new connexions, he published a violent Philippic against the Non-conformist seminaries, charging the scholars with a defect of learning, of loyalty, of sanctity, and of respect for the church; and the tutors with a lack of integrity, for breaking the oath which they took at Oxford and Cambridge. Their right to have academies, for the instruction of their young people, is boldly and flatly denied.

A defence of the academies was undertaken by Samuel Palmer, a minister in London, a person of Mr. Wesley's own standing. It is short, it denies the charges which were brought against them, and explains the mode of education there pursued. To this, Mr. Wesley gave an answer, supporting his accusation. In consequence of this, Mr. Palmer wrote "A Vindication of Dissenting Academies," which ably wipes off the foul stains thrown upon them. Mr. Wesley, determined to have the last word, published a reply to Mr. Palmer's Vindication. It is a quarto pamphlet, containing one hundred and sixty pages, closely printed. He goes over the same ground which he had trodden before. He that reads it to the end, must be a man of uncommon patience. Mr. Palmer, conceiving himself to have merited great things from the Dissenters, for having appeared in their defence, became dissatisfied with what he considered their neglect, and, in the year 1710, conformed, and had the living of Maldon given him. The restraints which he had found it necessary before to impose upon himself, he then threw aside, became openly vicious and immoral, and continued in this state, till death called him to judgment.

CHAP. V.

OUTWARD STATE OF DISSENTERS DURING THIS PERIOD.

SECT. I.—*Their Numbers and Rank.*

To estimate, with any degree of accuracy, the number of persons who separated from the Church of England, when she published the stern degree of uniformity, was, from the first, impossible; because the persecution, which immediately took place, made the Dissenters more desirous of concealment than fame. To Dr. Calamy we are much indebted for the biographical sketches of the ministers who were ejected for their nonconformity. They amounted to about two thousand; and for learning, for soundness in the faith, for piety, for zeal, and for skill and gifts in preaching, the church of Christ has never seen such a body of confessors. To say that they far excelled any whom England can produce at the present day, in learning and worth, would not be flattery, but faint praise.

Twenty-six years had elapsed from the Act of Uniformity to the revolution, and, considering that the decay of life was hastened by their privations and their sufferings, we may suppose that one half of them, at least, had been removed by death, and not a few of their churches entirely scattered. Still it is probable,

that the number of Dissenters was greater after the revolution than before; that it continued to increase during the course of this period; and was larger when Queen Anne died, than when King William ascended the throne.

A considerable change, however, gradually took place, both in the number and situations of the dissenting congregations. Many of the non-conformist ministers were ejected from country parishes. From the mutual attachment which existed between them and their people, and a sense of obligation to watch for their souls, as there was no one else to do it, they continued to preach the gospel in their former fields of labour, and to retain the charge of those whom they had converted to the faith of Christ. In many instances, some paternal property furnished their support; and in others, the contributions of their hearers, and of benevolent individuals at a distance, enabled them to live. They often closed their days in the village where they had spent the vigour of life, beloved and revered by their chosen flock. In some places, the population did not furnish an adequate number of converts to supply the place of such as were removed by death; especially, as in the years of persecution, it may naturally be supposed but few attended on their ministry, except such as felt the powers of the world to come. In consequence of this, the pastor and his flock grew old, declined, and died together: few, comparatively, were left behind.

In other places, the congregation did not diminish in numbers; but when the pastor died, they were unable to furnish support to a successor. While the more zealous of the old members lived, they continued to

meet and to edify one another by prayer, by reading the Scriptures and a sermon of some eminent divine. Sometimes they were favoured with the services of a neighbouring minister; but they afterwards melted into the general mass of the established church. Such as had opportunity, joined themselves to the congregations in the neighbouring towns; and many, for the sake of the gospel, quitting the place of their nativity, went to reside where they could enjoy the ordinances of religion. In numerous instances, congregations were broken up for want of a successor to the deceased minister, because the number of persons educated for the service was not sufficient to supply the deficiencies created by the ravages of death.

The want of a place of worship was sometimes productive of the same effects. The small, but devout, assembly met in the habitation of the minister, or in the more commodious mansion of some distinguished and zealous member, who joyfully received the ark of God. The owner of their place of worship dies, and they lose the opportunity of assembling there; for the heir is a man of a different spirit, and they are all scattered abroad. Many a cathedral might be shut up with less injury to the interests of religion. In many hundreds of instances, congregations were by these various means entirely dissipated.

But these deficiencies were more than supplied in other ways. There were many towns from which no minister had been ejected, but where there were many persons who preferred the government and worship of the non-conformist churches to those of the establishment.

As soon as a sufficient number were collected to form the nucleus of a congregation, they sought the occasional services of neighbouring ministers, and afterwards procured a pastor for themselves. Scores of dissenting churches, which became at length highly respectable both for piety and for numbers, were originally formed in this way.

During this period, in hundreds of congregations which had been already formed, there was a considerable increase, especially in country towns and villages. During the persecuting reigns of Charles and James, multitudes of people who preferred the ministry of the Non-conformists did not possess the virtue, or the fortitude, to bear "the world's loud laugh," and submit to the ridicule which a recent secession from an establishment never fails to draw down, especially when this was accompanied with imprisonment, and fines. But when the glorious Revolution made dissent no crime, many acted more according to their own inclination. This was the case in the country towns and villages, more remarkably than in London, and other very populous cities.

The metropolis spreads a veil over its inhabitants. To their neighbours, if they choose, they are utterly unknown. Their acquaintances and friends are scattered wide, and as they have the opportunity of selecting them out of a considerable number, congeniality of sentiments is the more ordinary bond of union. Where a man worships God, or what is his creed, perhaps not an individual in the street where he resides can tell. Each one may, therefore, indulge his own

pleasure, without hearing one reproachful word uttered against his sect. But in the smaller country towns, and still more so in the villages, every thing relating to a man and his family is known. He is seen to turn his back on the steeple, and to go to the conventicle. The citizen of London might pass in the crowd unnoticed to the meeting-house, but the villager was unable to escape detection.

When toleration was given, the spirit of high church bigotry was still potent, and numbers in every place sorely grudged the liberty which had been granted, and endeavoured to render the exercise of it as unpleasant as they could; but these vexations were puny in comparison of the former severities. Slighting, therefore, all other hinderances, considerable numbers, where the minister was an animated and acceptable preacher, became Dissenters.

The opportunity for ascertaining the number of Dissenters was lost, and cannot be regained. One document, however, remains, and as it gives the most particular and authentic information on the subject, its insertion will be agreeable to the reader. It is a list of the number of dissenting congregations in each county in England and Wales, which was drawn up in 1715, and the following year, by Daniel Neal, the author of the history of the Puritans. The character of the man is a voucher for its accuracy. As it was composed soon after the death of Queen Anne, the alterations during so short a space would be inconsiderable; and it may be looked upon as the most faithful statement which can now be given of the number of the Dissenters at the close of the first period of their history.

The first column gives the whole number of congregations, and the second distinguishes the Baptists.

Bedfordshire . . .	23	22	Brought forward	628	149
Berkshire . . .	26	10	Middlesex . . .	91	26
Buckinghamshire . . .	17	7	Monmouthshire . . .	8	2
Cambridgeshire . . .	23	5	Norfolk . . .	20	4
Cheshire . . .	21	4	Northamptonshire . . .	40	22
Cornwall . . .	12		Northumberland . . .	27	
Cumberland . . .	19	2	Nottinghamshire . . .	8	1
Devonshire . . .	61	6	Oxfordshire . . .	14	3
Dorsetshire . . .	35	5	Rutland . . .	6	3
Durham . . .	9		Shropshire . . .	15	2
Derbyshire . . .	28		Somersetshire . . .	55	12
Essex . . .	52	8	Suffolk . . .	34	
Gloucester . . .	51	16	Surry . . .	20	4
Hampshire . . .	32	9	Sussex . . .	16	1
Herefordshire . . .	8	1	Staffordshire . . .	16	2
Hertfordshire . . .	26	10	Warwickshire . . .	18	4
Huntingdonshire . . .	31	1	Wiltshire . . .	20	4
Kent . . .	52	27	Worcestershire . . .	18	8
Lancashire . . .	47	4	Westmoreland . . .	5	
Leicestershire . . .	33	9	Yorkshire . . .	48	
Lincolnshire . . .	22	3			
Carried forward			Total		
628 149			1107 247		

NORTH WALES.

Anglesey . . .	1
Carnarvonshire . . .	1
Denbigh . . .	3
Merioneth . . .	1
Montgomery . . .	2
Flint . . .	1

SOUTH WALES.

Brecknock . . .	3
Cardigan . . .	3
Carmarthen . . .	9
Glamorgan . . .	7
Pembroke . . .	8
Radnorshire . . .	4
Total	
43	

The Presbyterians were a very large majority. In the assembly of divines at Westminster, while there were scores of Presbyterians, but five Independents were to be found. Though they had very considerably increased, they were still far inferior in number. The Baptists were the smallest body of the three, but in a

state of gradual increase. It appears that both the number and size of the Presbyterian congregations were nearly double to that of the Independents, and that the congregations of the Baptists, though nearly equal to the Independents in number, were inferior to them in size. The superiority of the Presbyterians is evident from the arrangements in the meetings of the deputies of the three denominations for business. For one Independent, and one Baptist, there were always to be two Presbyterians.

So far as titles and worldly honours give dignity or respectability to the church of Christ, the Dissenters were at their acmé in the earlier part of this period, or perhaps before its commencement. Some of the nobility adhered to the ejected ministers, and many of the gentry continued to attend on their ministry. Vincent Alsop, whose meeting-house was in Westminster, had some of the nobles of the land among his auditors. Not a few distinguished persons attended on the ministry of Mr. Howe, at Silver-street, in the city. But the Dissenters in cities and towns were merchants, manufacturers, tradesmen, and mechanics. Farmers and their servants composed the most considerable portion of the congregations in villages and hamlets, with here and there a country squire.

But the non-conforming nobility and gentry scarcely outlived the days of the ejected ministers. The patrons of these good men were the grave, old nobility, who had been trained up in the sober days of the suspension of monarchy, when there was also a suspension of all those vanities and amusements, of

that parade and ostentation, “ of the lust of the eye and the pride of life,” which are so destructive to the great world. The principles of the non-conforming nobility had been established, their characters formed, and they were not ashamed to adhere to those despised men, whose worth they knew, whose doctrine they approved, and whose ministry had been blessed to their conversion and growth in grace. This sufficiently accounts for their continuance with them to the end of life.

The inauspicious reign of Charles II., an unprincipled debauchee, proved a greater curse to none than to the English nobility. Unfeigned piety of heart and sanctity of life were defamed, under the name of fanaticism, enthusiasm, hypocrisy and folly. To the rising race, education under such impressions was ruin*. From that time, the nobles of England lost the sober, serious, and dignified deportment which numbers of them had sustained from the æra of the Reformation. Let any one read the numerous books of the ancient Puritans, on the most evangelical subjects, and then let him read the dedications to the nobility of that day; and the conclusion must be, that they were not only unfeignedly pious, but also intimately acquainted with the doctrines of the Gospel. Charles II. was a curse to the heirs of those pious nobles. Some embraced infidelity; many became ashamed of religion; and still more forsook its ordinances of worship. With some splendid exceptions, this has continued to the present day. Thus, the privileged orders have lost much of that homage and weight in the community, which they possessed, when they were not only superior to others in

* Burnet's History of his Own Times.

wealth and worldly honours, but patterns of piety and benevolence. Instead of spending their princely revenues in luxury and excess, in trifling amusements, in gaming, and in the “pomps and vanities of this wicked world,” the Puritan nobility and gentry exercised the old English hospitality, were the patrons of all the poor families near their mansions, and were surrounded by a tenantry who looked up to them with veneration, because their frown discountenanced vice, and their smile gave energy to those virtues, of which they were themselves the bright example.

SECT. II.—*Labours of Ministers, and their Support.*

FROM some records which remain, we learn that the labours of the first dissenting ministers, both in study and in public services, are entitled to the highest praise. They had but two seasons for public worship on the Lord's-day, the morning and afternoon; but their services were longer than ours. The following account of the method of conducting public worship by Matthew Henry, at Chester, and afterwards at Hackney, affords a specimen of what was practised by the Presbyterians of that generation.

“His constant work, on the Lord's-day at Chester, was to pray six times in public, to sing six times, to expound twice, and preach twice. He went to the congregation exactly at nine, began the public worship with singing the hundredth psalm; then prayed a short, but fervent and suitable prayer; then he read some part of

the Old Testament, and expounded it, going through it in course, from the beginning to the end; then he sang another psalm, then he prayed for about half an hour, then he preached about an hour, then prayed and sang, and gave the blessing. He did the same exactly in the afternoon, only expounding the New Testament. This was his constant Lord's-day's work *."

Evening lectures were then almost unknown, but the manner in which the sabbath was closed, in the houses of the Dissenters, demands high praise. After retirement for the secret exercises of devotion, in reading, meditation, and prayer, the family was called together, the children and servants were catechised and questioned on the discourses which they had heard, a sermon was read, and psalms were sung, and the day concluded with fervent and solemn prayer. In most congregations, there were some in whose houses a few of their members assembled, and the sermons which had been delivered in public were repeated, from notes which had been taken down, or from a faithful memory, and acts of worship, in prayer and praise, were united with the exercise. This was not unfrequently done by the minister himself to such of his people as found it convenient to meet together at his house.

Weekly lectures were in common use; and some of the country ministers maintained stated exercises of worship in the villages around them. Monthly services were supported in places more remote. Matthew Henry used to make a circuit, every year, through an extensive range of the surrounding country, and preach daily in the meeting-houses of the neighbouring minis-

* Henry's Life, pp. 157, 158.

ters, and in the habitations of his friends. He afterwards added a second and more extensive itinerancy*.

Congregational fasts were frequently observed by the most zealous ministers and churches. These exercises were common, during the civil wars, and strictly observed, generally every month, by those on the parliament's side. The service began at nine in the morning, and continued, without intermission, till four in the afternoon. Seven hours did the Lords and Commons of those days spend in prayer and singing psalms, and in hearing the word of God read and preached. Some, who now occupy their seats in St. Stephen's chapel, will smile at the taste of their predecessors, or pronounce them intoxicated with fanaticism and enthusiasm. But Christ was neither a fanatic nor an enthusiast; and he spent whole nights in prayer to God. Brevity of devotions is no proof of their being either rational or sincere; it may be an evidence, that the person feels no delight in the employment. These days of fasting continued, though perhaps less frequently, till the restoration, when profaneness and debauchery occupied their place. The Nonconformists, however, continued practices so well suited to their afflicted and persecuted state. Mr. Henry and his flock kept such days of extraordinary devotion, four times a year*.

In these various exercises, great pains were taken to prepare for the pulpit; and what was delivered there, from week to week, was, in respect to accuracy at least, ordinarily fit for the press. Many of the publications of this period were ordinary discourses, and bear unquestionable marks of the laborious industry of the authors,

* Henry's Life, pp. 252, 268.

† Ibid., p. 217.

in the composition of the weekly sermons. Much of their time must consequently have been spent in their study, in order to prepare two discourses for each returning sabbath, beside the frequent sermons on other days.

The man who would make the sentiments and taste of his own age a rule for every other, and would praise or condemn according to this standard, wants the comprehension of mind necessary to a fair comparison of different periods. If we look to the period before the revolution, we shall perceive that the practices of the Dissenters were derived from the Nonconformists, and theirs again from the Puritans. With the exception of their controversial pieces, the works of the Puritans consist chiefly of their sermons, exhibited in their original form, or wrought into the shape of a treatise on a particular subject.

Such also were the ponderous volumes of the Nonconformists. After the Act of Uniformity had excluded them from the pulpit, some of them, happily for the Christian church and the cause of the Redeemer, employed their unwelcome leisure in composing treatises on a variety of theological subjects, doctrinal, experimental, and practical. In this number may be ranked Baxter, Bates, Howe, and, above all, Owen. But their publications chiefly consist of their weekly sermons, either in their first shape, with all their heads and subdivisions, or as a treatise, with its numerous chapters and sections.

Of sermons alone consisted the principal works of Manton, Charnock, Flavel, and Clarkson. The five huge folios, with many smaller ones, of the first, the

two bulky volumes of the second, two well-sized folios of the third, and the large volume of the last, show us what was the daily bread with which their congregations were fed. The vast treasure of evangelical truth which they contain, and the rich display of genius, learning, depth of thought, sagacity of judgment, and ardour of piety, must astonish and delight those who are familiarly acquainted with their writings; and cannot fail to excite wonder at the patience of labour, and perseverance of application which are stamped so deeply on all their works.

By a competent judge, too, it will be easily seen, that composition formed but an inferior portion of their toil. From the richness and fulness of their sermons, from the extent of knowledge, and the copiousness of allusion and reference, with which they everywhere abound, it will be evident that a considerable part of their time must have been occupied in the attentive and vigorous perusal of the best works of theological and biblical science.

As the first dissenting ministers were the hearers, the assistants and co-pastors, it may readily be conceived that they would be the imitators of the men whom they so much esteemed, admired, and loved. It was indeed necessary; for the people had been accustomed to well-studied and elaborate discourses, from the ablest preachers of the former generation; and it is but justice to say, that they had profited by them. It is not beyond the truth to affirm, that within the pale of the Christian church, there were none to be found with so large a measure of divine knowledge and devotedness to God. Nor should this appear strange, for they were

a body of confessors, who, having enjoyed the instructions of the ablest ministers, separated themselves from the world, and submitted to its contempt, its derision, and its injuries, for Christ's sake.

The looser preaching, that might suit a congregation just called out of ignorance, would not have satisfied these societies, which were skilful in the word of righteousness. And, on a due consideration of all the circumstances, we must see that it was necessary for the first dissenting ministers to study their discourses with greater care than may be requisite in a multitude of places at the present time; and that, in doing so, they observed that method which was most conducive to the edification of their hearers.

Such was the mode of preaching in general use among the Presbyterians, and the more learned of the Independents and Baptists. Among some of the Presbyterians, many of the Independents, and still more of the Baptists, a less elaborate way of preaching prevailed. They preached without notes. Some used them for occasional reference, and a few read their sermons. This is said to have been Charnock's practice; and the shortness of his sight rendering a glass necessary, lessened the popularity of his elocution. But by far the greater part preached without book. This formed a line of distinction between the Dissenters and the clergy of the establishment, among whom, reading discourses now became general.

The Lord's Supper was usually dispensed, in the dissenting churches, every month; to the more private duties of the ministerial office, such as pastoral visits to the flock, and especially to the afflicted, much attention

was paid. The instruction of the young in the principles of religion, was considered as an important branch of ministerial duty. Mr. Doolittle, Mr. Henry, and others, had public stated exercises for this purpose, and extended their labours so far as to convey to their catechumens very considerable measures of theological truth.

The separation of the Non-conformists from the establishment, and the formation of distinct congregations, called for the performance of a new duty. The law of tithes had before rendered unnecessary the collection of money from the mass of the community; but the support of dissenting ministers rested entirely on the contributions of the people, and continues to do so to the present day.

That a man who devotes all his time and all his talents to the spiritual instruction of a Christian society, should receive from them a remuneration sufficient for the maintenance of himself and his family, is one of those axioms in the system of moral obligation, the truth of which is perceived as soon as it is expressed. It is the way in which Christ made provision for the ministers of his Gospel; and this regulation of the supreme Head of the church, human wisdom could never improve. Had Christ's original rule been everywhere observed, ecclesiastical history would not have had to record ages of ignorance and superstition, produced by pampered priests, so fattened by the provision which Christ never made for them, as to be rendered lazy and unable to work. Nor would it have been necessary to enumerate a multitude of bloody persecutions, for which religion was employed as the pretext; but the fear of losing the

loaves and the fishes was the cause. Had an indolent and careless clergy never had anything to depend on but the inheritance of the primitive pastors, which was the oblations of the faithful, they would soon have been starved out of the priesthood, and obliged to retire to their proper sphere of action. Some secular employment would have furnished them with a morsel of bread; and men, better qualified, and possessing the true spirit of the pastoral office, would have worthily filled their place.

It may probably be objected, that if there were no other than voluntary provision for ministers in thousands of places the people must be destitute of religious instruction, because, in some, they could not, and in others they would not, support a minister. This may be admitted; but what is the cause? A departure from the institutions of Christ. Things may be so deranged, as to render the restoration of the original rule a matter of immense difficulty. Neglect to teach a person in childhood the elements of language, or the principles of religion, and let him remain untutored till forty years of age: you then begin too late; he is disinclined to learn; he is almost unable. The uncultivated mind cannot endure the tediousness of confinement and the severities of application. If he had been taken at the proper time, all would have been easy. Had Christianity been always propagated in the legitimate way, the people would have felt themselves bound, by the adamant chains of duty, to support their spiritual instructor: and, in a country like England, such arrangements could have been made as, in the poorest places, to have provided support for a minister. In

some few situations, where the people might be unable of themselves, assistance from more opulent and generous Christians, in towns and cities, would have been sufficient to supply deficiencies. But where human institutions have made void the ordinances of Christ, and have introduced a state of things directly opposite, the extreme difficulty of returning to the original condition and frame of the Christian church is frankly acknowledged, while it is deeply deplored.

An important service is rendered to Christians, when they are called to support their own ministers. They are taught to cherish, to exercise, and to cultivate the principles of Christian justice and benevolence. The habit of giving of their substance, for the advancement of religion, is confirmed and strengthened by practice; and piety to God, and affection for mankind, are augmented by every act of beneficence which they perform. To take this office out of their hands, and put it into those of the government, is to make men children, and deprive them of an honour to which they are entitled.

The support of the dissenting ministers was in the primitive mode. They depended on the contributions of their congregation. In this way there was little stimulus to ambition, and a feeble lure to avarice. But, to humble and contented minds, which were chiefly intent on promoting the grand ends of the Christian ministry, it furnished what was necessary, and satisfied their desires. It was an age of simplicity and economy. The immense taxes, under the load of which the country now labours, and which have so prodigiously enhanced the price of every article of subsistence, were then unknown. On a very small salary, a family, frugal in its

habits, could then live with decency and comfort. With the exception of some villages and small towns, where the hearers were but few or poor, what was necessary for the support of the minister was collected among his own people, and, in many places, it was a decent competence. Praise is due to the benevolence of the more opulent Christians in London, who, by an annual collection, raised a fund to assist the poorer congregations in the country, in giving their ministers a necessary support.

The worst provided of the dissenting ministers is in a better situation than the curates in the established church. Where the sums given are equal, the kindness of the congregation, their friendship for the minister, the lively interest they take in everything pertaining to him, and their readiness to contribute to his relief in seasons of extraordinary necessity or distress, have nothing corresponding in the curate's scanty allowance from his rector, and in the cold unconcern of the parish, which thinks it pays money enough to the beneficed incumbent, without assisting his helper.

In the earlier Baptist churches, many of the ministers were illiterate men, who followed some branch of business. For the people were poor, and could not have enjoyed the ordinances of religion in their own communion, unless they had received them free from cost. It was likewise a common opinion among them, that ministers ought not to receive any remuneration. In defence of it, they quoted a passage in the prophet Micah iii. 11. —“ The priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money.” The pride and luxury of the established clergy, and their severity in the collection of the tithes,

confirmed the Baptists in these ideas, which were no doubt still further strengthened by the secret influence of a penurious spirit. Sentiments which spare a man's purse, are in general welcome to the heart.

In London, the Baptists, early sensible that by enabling the ministers to devote themselves entirely to the pastoral office, the people would reap the greater benefit, provided them with what was necessary for their support. Anxious to diffuse the same spirit in the country, they employed, in the year 1688, Benjamin Keach, pastor of a church in Horsleydown, who was greatly respected by the body, to draw up a pamphlet on the subject. He complied, and by arguments, drawn from positive institution under the Gospel, from the care taken of the ministers of religion under the law, and from the light of nature, proved it to be the duty of every congregation, that was able, to support its minister*.

That the work might have the more extensive circulation and influence, it was recommended by the most eminent ministers in London. The following year, when the representatives of more than a hundred churches assembled in the metropolis, Mr. Keach's pamphlet was recommended to the perusal of their congregations. They wrote, also, a circular epistle to the churches, in which they said, "they held this as a great neglect of duty in churches, that they did not make due provision for the maintenance of their ministers, according to their ability†." In order to carry their object

* Keach's Ministers' Maintenance Vindicated. Crosby's Hist., vol. iv., p. 295.

† Crosby's Hist., vol. iv., p. 297.

more effectually into execution, the assembly resolved to establish a public fund, from which assistance might be given to congregations that were poor.

To find new places of worship for two thousand ministers was by no means an easy task. During the iron age of persecution, while "the rod of the wicked lay upon the lot of the righteous," a meeting-house was so precarious a kind of property, and so dangerous to its possessor, that there was but little encouragement to erect such a building. A large room, a hall, a barn, a warehouse, were occupied; with ardent wishes for better days, when they might provide more appropriate structures for public worship. Yet, during these years of trial, meeting-houses were erected in great numbers. But these were the days of the energy of religion; when its influence communicated a heroism, a daring intrepidity, which despised dangers, and hazarded the loss of all, for the sake of Christ.

When the revolution gave peace, every congregation sought to provide itself with a suitable place of worship. That beneficial communion of churches, by which hundreds assist one, and exertions, impossible to the individual congregation, are successfully made by many, was the work of a future age. We, therefore, may justly wonder that the places built during this period were so substantial and convenient. Village churches would not bear comparison. No one would find, in the meeting-houses, that damp and filth, which would lead persons to judge that they were temples consecrated to some impure spirit, who delighted to dwell in subterraneous vaults. There must have been a general exer-

tion among the body of Dissenters, in all parts of the kingdom, and an extraordinary exercise of Christian benevolence. This energy, indicative of the power of good principles, must have been productive of the best effects; for liberality, at the call of duty, leaves the happiest impression on the mind, and prepares it for the performance of works of faith and labours of love. This period may not improperly be called "The age of building meeting-houses." The name of chapels had not then been borrowed from the establishment*.

SECT. III.—*Public Services, and Associations of Dissenters.*

As the ritual of the church of England for ordaining priests and deacons was pronounced by the Non-conformists improper and unscriptural, they may be supposed to have observed a different mode. Among the Presbyterians, during this period, it was common to ordain several candidates for the ministry, at the same time; and consequently not in the place where they were to minister, nor in the presence of those of whom they were entrusted with the charge. The origin of

* Some of the title-deeds of the old Presbyterian meeting-houses show that there was a prevalent hope of a comprehension, for provision is made for the disposal of the premises, in case such an event should take place. The relief granted at the revolution, and the promises of the clergy, inspired the expectation of such an event. But the majority, both in church and state, were of a different mind. Had it not been for William's influence, toleration would not have been given; and but for the influence of the house of Hanover, it would not have been preserved.

this practice may be traced, perhaps, to the earlier days of the English Episcopacy. Among the Scotch Presbyterians, it had no place: the form of their ordination requires that it should be in the presence of the flock. The English Presbyterians retained the practice of ordaining several at a time, while the people were at a distance. The continuance of the practice, after the Restoration, might be further accounted for from the desire of secrecy, because there would be less frequent occasion for assembling to do that which exposed them all to danger.

From the Act of Uniformity, to the year 1694, it is not known that there was a public ordination among the Dissenters in England. Whenever the service was to be performed, the veil of secrecy was thrown over it, a place of retirement was sought, and none were suffered to be present but the persons ordaining, and the persons ordained: and the testimonials given were sometimes (as in Mr. Henry's case) in terms so obscure, as to betray a fear of punishment for what they did*. Though the Revolution rendered the ordination of dissenting ministers a lawful act, it was some time before they ventured on it in public. Some time must elapse before the mind can imbibe liberal principles, and dare to do all that the laws warrant to be done. Perhaps we scarcely make sufficient allowance for the spirit of the times. Extraordinary services among the Dissenters were regarded with peculiar jealousy, and it was loudly complained of by their enemies, that fifty young persons had been ordained to the dissenting ministry.

* Henry's Life, pp. 90, 91.

Within six years after the Revolution, the Dissenters had so far advanced in the enjoyment of their privileges, that secret ordinations would no longer satisfy them. Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Edmund Calamy, and six other young ministers, wishing to be ordained, were desirous that the service might be performed before the face of a congregation. Mr. Howe, who was requested to preach the sermon, declined engaging, for fear of giving offence to government. Dr. Bates disclosed to Mr. Calamy alone the reasons why he could take no part in the work. But Dr. Annesly, Mr. Alsop, Mr. Sylvester, Mr. Stretton, Dr. Williams, and Mr. Kentish, being less scrupulous and more determined, engaged in the service. In Dr. Annesly's meeting-house, in Little St. Helen's, were ordained Joseph Bennett, Thomas Reynolds, Edmund Calamy, Joseph Hill, William King, Ebenezer Bradshaw, and Joshua Bayes. One of them says :

“ The manner of that day's proceeding was this. Dr. Annesly began with prayer : then Mr. Alsop preached from 1 Pet. x. 1, 2, 3 ; Mr. Williams then prayed, and made a discourse concerning the nature of ordination ; then he mentioned the names of the persons that were to be ordained ; read their several testimonials, that were signed by such ministers as were well acquainted with them ; and took notice what places they were severally employed in as preachers : then he called for Mr. Bennett's confession of faith, put the usual questions to him out of the directory of the Westminster Assembly, and prayed over his head : then Mr. Thomas Kentish did the same by Mr. Reynolds ; Dr. Annesly did the like by me ; Mr. Alsop by Mr. Hill and Mr. King ; Mr. Stretton by

Mr. Bradshaw ; and Mr. Williams again by Mr. Bayes : and after all, Mr. Sylvester concluded with a solemn charge, a psalm, and a prayer. The whole took up all the day, from before ten to past six.

“ Before our being thus ordained, we were strictly examined, both in philosophy and divinity, and made and defended a thesis each of us, upon a theological question, being warmly opposed by the several ministers present.”

From Matthew Henry's Diary, it appears that a similar method of ordination was observed among the Dissenters of Cheshire, and the neighbouring counties *. Sometimes five or six, and on one occasion eight, candidates for the ministry were ordained at once, some of them to churches very distant. The loose connexion between ministers and people in the church of England, may be here discerned, as well as the want of that respect which is due in an affair in which the congregation is so nearly concerned. The ministers in this method of ordination do everything, the people nothing. It should, however, be mentioned, that some of the candidates at this time had an idea of being ordained ministers of Christ in general, and not pastors of a particular church. By degrees, Dissenters learned to ordain the minister in the face of his congregation, so that the ordination of more than one at a time, except in extraordinary cases, was laid aside.

From the beginning, the Independents entertained more just ideas of the rights of the people, and were farther removed from all episcopalian practices than the Presbyterians. Independent ordinations were always

* Henry's Life, pp. 260, 261.

in the face of the church, and the people bore their share in the transaction. In a case of dire necessity, a man may be married by the awkward way of proxy; but it is far more rational and proper to have his bride standing by his side. Though the services of the ministers were nearly the same, some of the Independents objected to the imposition of hands, as a practice which ought to have been laid aside, as soon as the power of conferring extraordinary gifts had ceased. Some independent churches performed the work of ordination among themselves, and invited the neighbouring ministers only to witness their faith and order, without taking any part in the service. But this practice gradually fell into disuse*.

The method of ordination among the Baptists bore

* The following extract from the records of the church at Wellingborough, presents an ordination of this kind. "The 3d September, 1691, we held a church meeting with fasting and prayer, for the choosing of elders and setting them apart. We chose brother John Osborne to the office of rule, with brother Henseman. When we had chosen them by the lifting up of the hands of the church, and the testification of their desires, then we ordained them. Brother Henseman and brother Osborne solemnly covenanted with the people, in the presence of the Lord, to be faithful to the charges committed to them. The church also covenanted to carry it towards them as becoming people to their officers."

"We chose brother Robert Bettson to be our pastor; this was also with the joint consent of the church. The brethren testified their choice by word; and afterwards the whole church, brethren and sisters, testified their choice by standing up and lifting up their hands to the Lord. We sent for brother Bettson in, and acquainted him with the church's voice, which the Lord helped him to accept. Then we proceeded to ordain brother Bettson, in which our elders, brother Henseman and brother Osborne laid their hands on brother Bettson, and prayed, setting him before the Lord, testifying to the Lord, that that was the man they had chosen to the office of a pastor. And after prayer laid their hands on him again, and declared to the people that he was their pastor. And the ruling elders gave him authority, entering into covenant with him. There were several pastors of other churches, as Mr. Davis, Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Beds, besides brothers of other churches."

a near resemblance to that of the Independents. Mr. Crosby says, when the church in Barbican ordained Mr. Burroughs,—

“The church sent messengers to those ministers whom they particularly desired to take a part in the service, and gave a general invitation to others, to honour them with their presence on the occasion. Mr. Foxwell began the service by reading the Scriptures, 1 Tim. iii. and iv., and prayer for the church, for its officers, for the presence of God, and for the aid of his grace. Mr. Stinton preached from Phil. i. 1, and explained the office of an elder, and of deacons. He was followed by Mr. Nathaniel Hodges, who, in a discourse from Tit. i. 5, explained and vindicated their form of ordination. After this, Mr. Stinton, addressing himself to the members of the church who were collected into one place, desired them to express their approbation and confirmation of the choice which they had made of Mr. Burroughs to be their pastor. This was unanimously done by holding up their hands. He then turned to Mr. Burroughs and said, ‘As this church has chosen you to be their pastor, signify to us whether you accept of their call, and are willing for the sake of Christ, and the good of this community, to be put into this office.’ Mr. Burroughs signified his acceptance, and declared that he was determined to make the Holy Scriptures his only rule and standard. After a short prayer suitable to the occasion, the ministers present laid their right hands on Mr. Burroughs’ head, and Mr. Stinton, in the name of the whole, pronounced the following words: ‘Brother Joseph Burroughs, we do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and with the consent of this church,

ordain thee to be an elder, bishop, or overseer of this church of Jesus Christ.' And their hands continuing on his head, Mr. Stinton put up a short prayer to God for him and the congregation. Two deacons were then ordained in a similar manner, and with the same rites. Mr. Mulliner, after praying over them, went up into the pulpit, and preached a very excellent discourse from 1 Thess. v. 12, 13, on the duties of a Christian church towards their officers, both pastors and deacons, after which he prayed. A psalm of thanksgiving was then sung, and the assembly was dismissed with one of the apostolic benedictions*."

Some of the Baptists, he tells us, objected to this form, and thought that the ministers who practised it, in setting a person apart to the work of the ministry, assumed greater power and authority than became them, and they thought the apostles themselves would not have used these words, "we ordain thee." By them, therefore, the words were omitted; and when they laid their hands on his head, they only prayed for a blessing on the pastor elect. This they conceived to be sufficient, and that they went as far as they knew that the apostles did, who laid their hands on the persons whom they ordained, and prayed to God in their behalf.

In this denomination, too, there were some who had the strongest aversion to the imposition of hands in ordination, because they conceived that it savoured too much of priestly pretensions to the communication of authority and extraordinary gifts. When, therefore, they were called to perform the service, they set the

* Crosby's History of Bapt., vol. iv., p. 180—189.

person apart by solemn prayer, but without laying their hands upon his head.

While some of the Baptist body were averse to the imposition of hands on ministers, many of them extended the rite to every member who was received into the communion of the church. Edward Barber, who, from being a clergyman in the church of England, before the civil wars, became pastor of a Baptist church in Bishopsgate-street, is said to have been the first who practised the laying on of hands on his converts, when, after their immersion, he received them into communion with his society. He died before the Restoration*. In a confession of faith, published by the Arminian Baptists, imposition of hands is declared to be "the duty of all baptized believers, and necessary to a right constituted church †." But it fell into disuse, after the middle of the eighteenth century. Mr. Danvers, of London, wrote with zeal against the rite, and was answered by Mr. Keach, whose church "made it a boundary of their communion, and would receive none into their society, but by this method; and they have been tenacious of this principle, even to this day ‡."

Numerous associations of churches were, during this period, instituted among the Dissenters. For he

* Crosby, vol. iii., p. 3.

† "It is the duty of all such who are believers baptized, to draw nigh unto God in submission to that principle of Christ's doctrine, to wit, prayer and the laying on of hands, that they may receive the promise of the Holy Spirit, whereby they may mortify the deeds of the body, and live in all things answerable to their professed institutions and desires, even to the honour of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light."—Crosby, vol. iv., pp. 391, 392.

‡ Crosby, vol. iv., p. 290. He published his History in the year 1740.

who thinks that a church should be insulated and unconnected with every other, has much yet to learn; for what is association among Christians and Christian churches, but their union to advance the cause of Christ? There is a period in the Dissenting annals, when association, in most parts of the country, was almost extinct; and it must be said of it, that it was a time of coldness and of death, in which but little was done for the advancement of religion. In the happier days of dissent, the principle of association was active. During the last twenty years, this spirit has regained its original energy; and thus, greater exertions have been made for the propagation of the gospel.

As soon as the Revolution enabled the Dissenters to appear in public, a spirit of association began to be displayed. The elder ministers, remembering with pleasure their classes and other public meetings, during the Interregnum, were anxious that they should be resumed in a shape which their altered circumstances would permit. In order to form as broad a basis as possible, it was proposed by the London ministers to establish a union between the Presbyterians and Independents, that, both in the metropolis and in the country, the ministers might hold their assemblies together for the general benefit. With this view, in the year 1690, a writing was drawn up, comprising such common principles as both parties could agree to subscribe; and it was to be considered as the bond of their union. The object was accomplished; and it was resolved that the ministers of the two denominations should henceforth go by the name of the United Ministers.

This document, which shows in how many things two of the principal denominations were agreed, and which served as the basis of their union, merits insertion*.

* The following heads of agreement have been resolved upon by the united ministers in and about London, formerly called Presbyterian and congregational; not as a measure for any national constitution, but for the preservation of order in our congregations, that cannot come up to the common rule by law established.

“ I. Of Churches and Church Members.

“ 1. We acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ to have one catholic church or kingdom, comprehending all that are united to him, whether in heaven or earth. And do conceive the whole multitude of visible believers and their infant seed, commonly called the catholic visible church, to belong to Christ's spiritual kingdom in this world: but for the notion of a catholic visible church here, as it signifies its having been collected into any formed society, under a visible human head on earth, whether one person singly, or many collectively, we, with the rest of the Protestants, unanimously disclaim it.

“ 2. We agree that particular societies of visible saints, who, under Christ their head, are statedly joined together for ordinary communion with one another in all the ordinances of Christ, are particular churches, and are to be owned by each other as instituted churches of Christ, though differing in apprehensions and practices in some lesser things.

“ 3. That none shall be admitted as members, in order to communion in all the special ordinances of the Gospel, but such persons as are knowing and sound in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, without scandal in their lives; and to a judgment regulated by the word of God, are persons of visible godliness and honesty; credibly professing cordial subjection to Jesus Christ.

“ 4. A competent number of such visible saints, as before described, do become the subjects of stated communion in all the special ordinances of Christ, upon their mutual declared consent and agreement to walk together therein according to the Gospel rule. In which declaration different degrees of explicitness shall no way hinder such churches from owning each other as instituted churches.

“ 5. Though parochial bounds be not of divine right, yet for common edification, the members of a particular church ought, as much as conveniently may be, to live near one another.

“ 6. That each particular church hath right to choose their own officers; and being furnished with such as are duly qualified, and ordained according to the Gospel rule, hath authority from Christ for exercising government, and of enjoying all the ordinances of worship within itself.

In consequence of this agreement, meetings were held, both in London and in the country: those in London

“ 7. In the administration of church power, it belongs to the pastors and other elders of every particular church, if such there be, to rule and govern; and to the brotherhood to consent according to the rule of the Gospel.

“ 8. That all professors, as before described, are bound in duty, as they have opportunity, to join themselves as fixed members of some particular church; their thus joining being part of their professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and an instituted means of their establishment and edification; whereby they are under the pastoral care, and in case of scandalous or offensive walking, may be authoritatively admonished, or censured, for their recovery, and for vindication of the truth and the church professing it.

“ 9. That a visible professor, thus joined to a particular church, ought to continue stedfastly with the said church, and not forsake the ministry and ordinances there dispensed, without an orderly seeking a recommendation to another church, which ought to be given when the case of the person apparently requires it.

“ II. *Of the Ministry.*

“ 1. We agree that the ministerial office is instituted by Jesus Christ, for the gathering, guiding, edifying, and governing of his church, and to continue to the end of the world.

“ 2. They, who are called to this office, ought to be endued with competent learning, and ministerial gifts; as also with the grace of God, sound in judgment, not novices in the faith and knowledge of the Gospel; without scandal, of holy conversation, and such as devote themselves to the work and service thereof.

“ 3. That ordinarily none shall be ordained to the work of this ministry, but such as are called and chosen thereto by a particular church.

“ 4. That in so great and weighty a matter, as the calling and choosing a pastor, we judge it ordinarily requisite, that every such church consult and advise with the pastors of neighbouring congregations.

“ 5. That after such advice the person consulted about, being chosen by the brotherhood of that particular church, over which he is to be set, and he accepting, be duly ordained, and set apart to his office over them; wherein 'tis ordinarily requisite, that the pastors of neighbouring congregations concur with the preaching elder or elders, if such there be.

“ 6. That whereas such ordination is only intended for such as were never ordained before to the ministerial office; if any judge, that in the case also of the removal of one formerly ordained, to a new station or pastoral charge, there ought to be a like solemn recommending him and his labours to the grace and blessing of God; no different sentiments or

were more frequent, but less public; those in the country, less frequent, but more public and solemn.

practice herein shall be any occasion of contention or breach of communion among us.

“ 7. It is expedient that they who enter on the work of preaching the Gospel, be not only qualified for communion of saints, but also that, except in cases extraordinary, they give proof of their gifts and fitness for the said work unto the pastors of churches of known abilities to discern and judge of their qualifications; that they may be sent forth with solemn approbation and prayer, which we judge needful, that no doubt may remain concerning their being called to the work; and for preventing, as much as in us lies, ignorant and rash intruders.

“ III. *Of Censures.*

“ 1. As it cannot be avoided, but that in the purest churches on earth, there will sometimes offences and scandals arise, by reason of hypocrisy and prevailing corruption, so Christ hath made it the duty of every church to reform itself by spiritual remedies, appointed by him to be applied in all such cases, viz., admonition and excommunication.

“ 2. Admonition, being the rebuking of an offending member in order to conviction, is in case of private offences to be performed according to the rule in Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17, and in case of public offences, openly before the church, as the honour of the Gospel, and the nature of the scandal shall require: and if either of the admonitions take place for the recovery of the fallen person, all further proceedings in a way of censure are thereupon to cease, and satisfaction to be declared accordingly.

“ 3. When all due means are used, according to the order of the Gospel, for the restoring an offending and scandalous brother, and he, notwithstanding, remains impenitent, the censure of excommunication is to be proceeded unto; wherein the pastor and other elders (if such there be) are to lead and go before the church, and the brotherhood to give their consent, in a way of obedience unto Christ, and unto the elders as over them in the Lord.

“ 4. It may sometimes come to pass, that a church member, not otherwise scandalous, may sinfully withdraw, and divide himself from the communion of the church to which he belongeth; in which case, when all due means for the reducing him prove ineffectual, he having hereby cut himself off from that church's communion, the church may justly esteem, and declare itself discharged of any further inspection over him.

“ IV. *Of Communion of Churches.*

“ 1. We agree, that particular churches ought not to walk so distinct and separate from each other, as not to have care and tenderness towards one another; but their pastors ought to have frequent meetings together, that by mutual advice, support, encouragement, and brotherly intercourse

The most celebrated of the country meetings was the Exeter assembly. The origin of this associated body

they may strengthen the hearts and hands of each other in the ways of the Lord.

“ 2. That none of our particular churches shall be subordinate to one another, each being endued with equality of power from Jesus Christ : and that none of the said particular churches, their officer, or officers, shall exercise any power, or have any superiority over any other church, or their officers.

“ 3. That known members of particular churches, constituted as aforesaid, may have occasional communion with one another in the ordinances of the Gospel, viz., the word, prayer, sacraments, singing psalms, dispensed according to the mind of Christ ; unless that church with which they desire communion, hath any just exception against them.

“ 4. That we ought not to admit any one to be a member of our respective congregations, that hath joined himself to another, without endeavours of mutual satisfaction of the congregation concerned.

“ 5. That one church ought not to blame the proceedings of another, till it hath heard what that church charged, its elders, or messengers can say, in vindication of themselves from any charge of irregular or injurious proceedings.

“ 6. That we are most willing and ready to give an account of our church proceedings to each other, when desired, for preventing or removing any offences that may arise among us. Likewise we shall be ready to give the right hand of fellowship, and walk together according to the Gospel rules of communion of churches.

“ V. *Of Deacons and ruling Elders.*

“ We agree, the office of a deacon is of divine appointment, and that it belongs to their office to receive, lay out, and distribute the churches stock to its proper uses, by the direction of the pastor and elders, if such there be. And whereas divers are of opinion, that there is also the office of ruling elders, who labour not in word and doctrine, and others think otherwise, we agree, that this difference make no breach among us.

“ VI. *Of Synods.*

“ 1. We agree, that in order to concord, and in any other weighty and difficult cases, it is needful, and according to the mind of Christ, that a synod be called to consult and advise about such matters.

“ 2. That a synod may consist of smaller or greater numbers, as the matter shall require.

“ 3. That particular churches, their respective elders and members, ought to have a reverential regard to the judgment of such synods, and not dissent therefrom, without apparent grounds from the word of God.

“ VII. *Of our Demeanour towards the civil Magistrate.*

“ 1. We do reckon ourselves obliged continually to pray for God's protection, guidance, and blessing upon the rulers set over us.

may be traced back so far as the year 1655. An assembly of the ministers of Devon and Cornwall was then formed, probably after the model of that established by Mr. Baxter and his brethren, in Worcestershire, for mutual edification and counsel. George Hughes, of Plymouth, presided in the first assembly as moderator.

During the reign of terror, these useful meetings were suspended: but the revolution, like spring after a Greenland winter, dissolved the rigour of the past season, and revived the associations. The Exeter assembly was held

“ 2. That we ought to yield unto them not only subjection in the Lord, but support them, according to our stations and abilities.

“ 3. That if, at any time, it shall be their pleasure to call together any number of us, or require any account of our affairs, and the state of our congregations, we shall most readily express all dutiful regard to them herein.

“ VIII. *Of a Confession of Faith.*

“ As to what appertains to soundness of judgment in matters of faith, we esteem it sufficient, that a church acknowledge the Scriptures to be the word of God, the perfect and only rule of faith and practice; and own either the doctrinal part of those commonly called the Articles of the Church of England, or the Confession, or Catechism, shorter, or larger, compiled by the assembly at Westminster, or the Confession agreed on at the Savoy, to be agreeable to the said rule.

“ IX. *Of our Duty and Deportment towards them that are not in Communion with us.*

“ 1. We judge it our duty to bear a Christian respect to fellow Christians, according to their several ranks and stations, that are not of our persuasion or communion.

“ 2. As for such as may be ignorant of the principles of the Christian religion, or of vicious conversation, we shall in our respective places, as they give us opportunity, endeavour to explain to them the doctrine of life and salvation, and to our uttermost persuade them to be reconciled to God.

“ 3. That such who appear to have the essential requisites to church communion, we shall willingly receive them in the Lord, not troubling them with disputes about lesser matters.

“ As we assent to the forementioned heads of agreement, so we unanimously resolve, as the Lord shall enable us, to practise according to them.”

early in 1691, and in a second meeting in the same year, Mr. Flavel was moderator, and preached. The principal business was to introduce the heads of agreement by the London ministers, into the west, and unite the Presbyterians and Independents of Devon and Cornwall as one body in their assembly. The object was happily attained. It was one of the last acts of Mr. Flavel's life; and he expressed the liveliest satisfaction in its success.

In the articles of concord, they agreed that they should not intermeddle with politics, nor the affairs of civil government, nor pretend to exercise church censures, but only to assist, advise, and counsel each other in the propagation of truth and holiness, and in the preservation of their churches from illiterate ministers, and profane and scandalous communicants. A friendly intercourse was, by this means, maintained among the ministers and congregations in the two associated counties. When any persons offered themselves to the work of the ministry, the assembly examined their testimonials, assigned a subject for a thesis to the candidates, and appointed the ministers who were to ordain them.

Records of associations of a smaller size in Hampshire*, and in Cheshire† still remain, and give us reason to conclude that they were spread over the greater part of England. The dispute about Dr. Crisp's works disturbed the harmony of the meetings in London; but it does not appear to have had any effect on the country associations.

* Sermon before an assembly of the ministers of Hampshire, in the year 1691, by Samuel Chandler, minister of Fareham.

† Matthew Henry's Life, p. 256—259.

The Baptists had their public meetings during this period. In the year 1689, a general assembly of the Calvinistic or Particular Baptists was held in London, "to consult of proper ways and means to advance the glory of God, and the well-being of their churches." Deputies were present from more than a hundred churches in England and Wales. The assembly zealously disclaims all manner of authority over the churches, and professes that it is its sole intention to recommend, in the way of counsel, what may be for their benefit, which was to be received no further than as it appeared agreeable to the word of God. A fast was recommended for lamenting national iniquities, and imploring a blessing on the union of the churches. A fund was established for relieving ministers in distress, for the support of itinerating preachers, and for assisting persons of promising talents in the acquisition of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew tongues, with a view to the work of the ministry*. Various questions proposed to them by the churches were considered, and answers given†. They are at pains to clear themselves, as a body, from the imputation of having been friendly to King James's dispensing with the penal laws; and

* In order to raise the fund, it proposed and recommended, that "a weekly subscription of a half-penny, a penny, two, three, four, five, or six pence a-week, should be set on foot in every congregation." The wonders which have been done by this mode, in the hands of the Wesleyan Methodists, few could have conceived, if they had not seen.

† One of the questions relates to excess in dress among church members, both men and women; to which the following answer is given, "that it is a shame for men to wear long hair, and long perriwigs, especially ministers," 1 Cor. xi. 14. They add, "that much time and treasure are foolishly wasted in adorning the body, which would be better spent in a careful endeavour to adorn the soul, and the charge laid out upon these superfluities, to relieve the necessities of the poor saints, and to promote the interests of Jesus Christ."

they profess themselves the unalterable friends of civil liberty, and most strongly attached to King William, both by gratitude and duty. They adopted and published a confession of faith, which had been drawn up by them in the year 1677. Its doctrinal articles accord with those of the reformed churches; and in those which respect government and discipline, with the exception of the section of infant baptism, it agrees with the confession of the Independents at the Savoy. So great was the harmony of the members, who amounted to a hundred and fifty, that scarcely one brother dissented from the assembly, in any one thing which was proposed to their consideration*.

Another general assembly of the same kind was held in the summer of the year 1691. A third meeting, in the following year, consisting of ministers and persons chosen by the churches to represent them. It continued sitting, from the 3d to the 24th of May. The churches belonging to the union were one hundred and seven; and it did not include the whole of the Particular Baptists; for there were other churches of the same faith and order, which never joined the assembly. Those who did unite, feeling the inconvenience of coming from so great a distance, agreed to divide the assembly into two meetings, to be held annually, the one in Bristol, at Easter, for the western part of England and Wales; the other, in London, at Whitsuntide, for the eastern part of the kingdom; and they devised various regulations for the advancement of the common cause†. There were associations in a narrower circle, where the members could frequently meet, without

* Crosby, vol. iii., pp. 245, 259.

† Ibid., vol. iii., pp. 264, 5, 6.

inconvenience. The London ministers had a meeting for consultation, every month.

The same spirit of union was displayed by the general, or Arminian Baptists. At the restoration, a confession of their faith was presented to the king by Thomas Grantham, signed by himself and forty-one others, which he said was owned and approved by more than twenty thousand people; and he craved his majesty's favour and protection in their behalf*. It is supposed, that the denomination could scarcely reckon so many when the revolution took place. It is to their praise, that, like the other Dissenters, they wished to improve religious liberty, for the benefit of their body. With this view, they had a general meeting in London, composed of representatives from their different churches, and for the same purposes as their Calvinistic brethren. Sensible of the benefit resulting from united counsel and co-operation, it was agreed by them, that a meeting should be held every year in the metropolis. Perseverance marked their determination, and the association has been annually convened to the present time.

In addition to these associations, it will be proper to mention the Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist boards. The ministers of each of these communions, in and around the metropolis, appointed meetings for promoting the interests of their body. In affairs which concerned them all as Dissenters, they united their counsels, in what is called the general body of the three denominations, consisting of the three boards united. For affairs that required continued attention and activity, a committee, chosen from the three boards, was

* Crosby, vol. iii., p. 79 : vol. ii., Append. No. 4.

appointed. The Presbyterians, as being most numerous and respectable, claimed that there should be two of their number, on all such committees, for one from the other bodies.

To these boards, the Dissenters, throughout the kingdom, looked for protection. It was likewise considered as a part of their duty to correspond with the executive government, on all proper occasions; and to render due respect to the supreme magistrate, at his accession to the throne, and in seasons of remarkable public calamity or success.

The first exercise of this intercourse was when William and Mary were seated on the British throne. The Presbyterian and Independent ministers drew up addresses, and went to court, with the venerable Dr. Bates at their head, who delivered the following address to the king and queen.

“ TO THE KING.

“ May it please your Majesty,

“ The series of successful events that has attended your glorious enterprize for the saving these kingdoms from so imminent and destructive evils, has been so eminent and extraordinary, that it may force an acknowledgement of the divine providence from those who deny it, and raises admiration in all who believe and reverence it. The beauty and speed of this happy work are the bright signatures of his hand, who creates deliverance for his people. The less of human power, the more of the divine wisdom and goodness has been conspicuous in it. If the deliverance had been obtained by fierce and bloody battles, victory itself had been de-

jected and sad, and our joy had been mixed with afflicting bitterness. But as the sun, ascending the horizon, dispels, without noise, the darkness of the night, so your serene presence has, without tumults and disorders, chased away the darkness that invaded us. In the sense of this astonishing deliverance, we desire, with all possible ardency of affection, to magnify the glorious name of God, the author of it, by whose entire efficacy the means have been successful: and we cannot, without a warm rapture of thankfulness, recount our obligations to your Majesty, the happy instrument of it. Your illustrious greatness of mind in an undertaking of such vast expense, your heroic zeal in exposing your most precious life in such an adventurous expedition, your wise conduct and unshaken resolution in prosecuting your great ends, are above the loftiest flights of language, exceed all praise. We owe to your Majesty the two greatest and most valuable blessings that we can enjoy—the preservation of the true religion, our most sacred treasure; and the recovery of the falling state, and the establishing it upon just foundations. According to our duty, we promise unfailing fidelity, and true allegiance to your Majesty's person and government. We are encouraged by your gracious promise, upon our first address, humbly to desire and hope that your Majesty will be pleased, by your wisdom and authority, to establish a firm union of your Protestant subjects in the matters of religion, by making the rule of Christianity to be the rule of conformity. Our blessed union, in the purity and the peace of the Gospel, will make this church a fair and lovely type of heaven, and terrible to our anti-Christian enemies. This will

make England the steady centre from whence a powerful influence will be derived for the support of reformed Christianity abroad: this will bring immortal honour to your name, above the trophies and triumphs of the most renowned conquerors. We do assure your Majesty, that we shall cordially embrace the terms of union, which the ruling wisdom of our Saviour has prescribed in his word. We shall not trespass further upon your royal patience, but shall offer up our fervent prayers to the King of Kings, that he will please to direct your Majesty by his unerring wisdom, and always incline your heart to his glory, and encompass your sacred person with his favour as with a shield, and make your government a universal blessing to these kingdoms."

His Majesty was graciously pleased to make this answer,—“ I take kindly your good wishes; and whatever is in my power shall be employed for obtaining such a union among you. I do assure you of my protection and kindness."

“ TO THE QUEEN.

“ May it please your Majesty,

“ Your happy arrival into your native country, and accession to the crown, have diffused an universal joy through this kingdom. It is an auspicious sign of public felicity, when supreme virtue and supreme dignity meet in the same person. Your inviolable firmness in the profession of the truth, and exemplary piety, are the most radiant jewels in your crown: the lustre of your conversation, unstained in the midst of tempting vanities, and adorned with every grace, recommends

religion as the most honourable and amiable quality, even to those who are averse from hearing sermons, and apt to despise serious instructions and excitations to be religious. We humbly desire your Majesty will be pleased, by your wisdom and goodness, to compose the differences between your Protestant subjects, in things of less moment concerning religion. We hope those reverend persons, who conspire with us in the main end, the glory of God and the public good, will consent to the terms of union, wherein all the reformed churches agree. We shall sincerely address our requests to God, that he will please to pour down, in rich abundance, his blessings upon your Majesty's person and government, and preserve you to his heavenly kingdom."

Her Majesty was graciously pleased to answer them thus:—"I will use all endeavours for obtaining a union, that is necessary for the edifying of the church. I desire your prayers."

Though it be a departure from a general rule, it would be injustice not to insert the address of condolence which the dissenting ministers presented to King William on Queen Mary's death. This also was delivered by Dr. Bates.

"May it please your Majesty,

"Though we come in the rear of the train of mourners to pay our tributary tears for the invaluable loss, in the death of your royal consort, and our most gracious Queen, yet our sentiments of it are with as tender a sympathy as are in the breasts of any of your

subjects. This gives the sharpest accent to our passions, that the considerations which are most proper and powerful to allay our sorrows, exasperate them; for while we remember what she was, how general and diffusive a blessing to the three kingdoms, the severe stroke of Providence in taking her from us is most afflicting. Such a concurrence of high perfection shined in her person and actions, that would have made her illustrious in a low condition; and in her exalted station, they were attractive of the eyes and admiration of all. Her mind was above the temptations that attend the throne. Majesty was mixed with that condescending humility, that tender and beneficent goodness, that she was easily accessible to all, for their relief and support. Her piety and purity were so conspicuous, her affections were so composed and temperate, that the court, that is usually the centre of vanity and voluptuousness, became virtuous by the impression of her example. Her conversation was so regular, that her enemies (if goodness, in such a bright eminency, had any) could not fasten a taint upon her. Her royal endowments for government, wisdom, magnanimity, vigilance, and care in managing affairs of state (without which the highest princes are but civil idols, useless and unprofitable to the world), these were in such a degree of excellency, that in your Majesty's constrained absence, while you were defending the interests of Christendom against a potent enemy abroad, with the sword of war, she sweetly ordered all things at home with the sceptre of peace. She is gone, and must return no more. Oh, astonishing grief!—but it becomes us, with humble submission, to acquiesce in the divine

disposal. The will of God is always directed by infinite wisdom, and is the rule of goodness. We must refresh our sorrows with the hope that she is entered into her Saviour's joy, whom she imitated and honoured; and that she is made happy in the love of God, and the light of his countenance for ever.

“ We humbly beseech your Majesty to accept the renewed assurances of our inviolable and constant fidelity to your person and government; and that we shall influence all who are within our compass to persevere in their duty. We shall earnestly pray to the blessed God, to keep you in the best protection, his encompassing favour, to support your spirit with divine comforts, and to continue long your precious life, so necessary for preserving the pure religion and the civil rights of this kingdom.”

Dr. Calamy, who was present on the occasion, says,—
“ I well remember, that, upon this speech, I saw tears trickle down the cheeks of that great prince, who so often appeared undaunted in the day of battle.”

Before the death of William, the Baptist board, which perhaps had not been formed at the time of the revolution, began to act in concert with the others in public matters; and, for the first time, when Queen Anne ascended the throne, the ministers of the three denominations waited on her, in a body, with an address, which was delivered by Dr. Daniel Williams.

“ Most gracious Sovereign,

“ We, your Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the Protestant dissenting ministers in and about

the city of London, crave leave humbly to represent the deep sense we have of the unspeakable loss we and all your Majesty's good subjects suffer by the death of our late glorious monarch, William III.

“ But herein we are most sensibly and effectually relieved by your Majesty's most happy and peaceable succession to these crowns, whose rightful and undoubted title we acknowledge with the greatest sincerity, and whose constant zeal for the Protestant religion is so justly renowned: for all which, with unfeigned joy, we bless and adore the divine goodness.

“ We further beg leave to assure your Majesty of our most dutiful affection and inviolable fidelity to your royal person and government; not doubting of our share in the many blessings of your Majesty's wise and happy reign, which we heartily pray may be long over us.”

Before we close this chapter, it will be proper briefly to notice the state of the Dissenters in Wales.

The father of them is said to have been John Penry, mentioned in a former part of the work, who studied at both universities, took the degree of M. A. at Oxford, and preached in both the seats of learning with approbation. He afterwards returned to his native country, and is supposed to have been the first who preached the Gospel there in purity. The seed which he sowed brought forth fruit. More effectually to serve the Welch, he sought to interest the government in their favour by publishing an account of their deplorable condition. He was a learned and pious man; but neither his learning nor his piety could offer any atonement for

being a Brownist, and expressing his aversion to the constitution of the Anglican church. For this crime, by the instigation of the Bishops, he suffered death in the year 1593, in the thirty-fourth year of his age *.

Mr. Wroth was, about the year 1620, raised up in support of the same principles. He was educated at Oxford, and was appointed rector of Llanfaches, in Monmouthshire. Being ejected from his rectory, he preached around the country; and, in the year 1639, formed a dissenting church at Llanfaches. A folio edition of the Welch Bible had been published in the year 1588, but it was not printed in a portable form, and rendered accessible to the mass of the people, till forty-two years afterwards. This was of unspeakable importance to the propagation of religion in the principality; but, as few could read, the influence of the Scriptures among them must have been slow †.

William Erbury and Walter Cradock, both of the university of Oxford, raised the standard of Puritanism at St. Mary's, in Cardiff, of which the former was vicar, and the latter curate. That harsh treatment which the Puritans received in England, extended itself to Wales; and first the curate, and afterwards the vicar, was ejected ‡. Grieved at the necessities of the people,

* See Neal, v., 374-9; quarto edition.

† Mr. V. Powell, in a work published in the year 1641, says, "that the professors of religion were very few in Wales, except in the corners of two or three counties; and that, about that time, a petition was sent to the king and parliament, that upon diligent search there were scarcely to be found as many conscientious, diligent preachers, as there were counties in Wales; and that the few who were there, were either silenced or much persecuted."

‡ Wood, in his *Athenæ Oxon.*, vol. ii., says, "Mr. William Erbury became student in Oxford in the year 1619, took one degree in arts, retired into Wales, and was beneficed. But he preached in conventicles,

they went about the country as itinerant preachers, and their labours were accompanied with remarkable success. Vavasor Powell, a man afterwards famous, and Morgan Lloyd, were among their converts. On the breaking out of the civil wars, Erbury, Cradock, and Powell, with their principal adherents, were, by the violence of the high-church party, compelled to leave their native country, and seek for a sanctuary in England.

They returned into Wales, and exerted themselves for the reformation of the people. An act of the parliament, in the year 1649, for the propagation of the Gospel there, paved the way for their more extended services, and added to the number of their fellow-labourers. So considerable was their progress, that though at the commencement of the civil wars there were not above two or three Non-conformist churches in the principality, before the restoration there were upwards of twenty, and some of them so numerous as to contain more than five hundred members.

and, refusing to read the declaration for pastimes, after divine service on the Lord's-day, he was summoned divers times to the High Commission Court at Lambeth, where he suffered for his obstinacy." He then cites the following passage out of Laud's annual account of his province for the year 1634:—"Llandaff diocese. The Bishop of Llandaff certifies, that this year he visited his diocese, and found that W. Erbury, Vicar of St. Mary's, in Cardiff, and Walter Cradock, his curate, have been very disobedient to his Majesty's instructions, and have preached schismatically and dangerously to the people. For this, he hath given the vicar a judicial admonition, and will further proceed, if he do not submit. As for his curate, Walter Cradock, being a bold, ignorant, young fellow, he had suspended him, and taken away his licence, which he had to serve the cure." Neal mentions, that Wroth and Erbury were summoned to London, in the following year, and there condemned as the great troublers of the church in Wales. One of the chief crimes laid to their charge was "refusing to read the declaration for the book of sports, on the Lord's-day."

The ministers ejected in Wales, by the Act of Uniformity, were in general men of learning; and when deprived of their livings, while they continued to preach as they had opportunity, they set up schools, and were eminently useful in diffusing knowledge among the rising generation. They likewise rendered considerable service to the cause of religion by instructing young men for the ministry of the Gospel, and for literary professions in civil life. By the revolution they were enabled to pursue their ministerial labours in security and peace; and their congregations so rapidly increased, that, at the close of the period, the number of dissenting churches amounted to forty-three.

CHAP. VI.

STATE OF RELIGION AMONG THE DISSENTERS
DURING THIS PERIOD.

To ascertain and delineate the advancement or decay of faith and holiness, in the hearts and lives of those who profess to be the followers of Christ, is the grand object of ecclesiastical history. Just sentiments of the Christian system, liberal views of moral truth, enlarged conceptions of the rights of conscience, and a resolute adherence to the principles of religious liberty, lose, apart from man's immortal destiny, the greater part of their value. But when viewed in relation to our spiritual welfare, and in their tendency to promote the salvation of the soul, they become a lofty theme, and can scarcely be prized too much. For their tendency to promote pure religion in the heart, and their utility in augmenting its influence, they should be held up to universal esteem. To ascertain that influence, by an inquiry into the state of religion among the Dissenters, during the reigns of King William and Queen Anne, is the design of the present chapter.

It is certainly a subject of just complaint, that scarcely any one department of sacred literature has been occupied to less advantage than that of ecclesiastical history. Eusebius has wandered from the right

path, as far as most of his successors. The exterior of the church is presented to us with sufficient fulness, but the interior is not disclosed to view. The number of the worshippers of the outer court, the names and succession of the bishops, their quarrels and contentions with each other, their pretensions to dignity, wealth, and power, and their outward sufferings from their adversaries, are fully delineated ; for they are the chief topics on which he dwells. But the advancement of spiritual religion in the soul, the conversion of sinners, and the edifying lives of the disciples, in the exercise of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, are topics for which the reader looks almost in vain. If, now and then, something of a spiritual nature drops from the pens of the earliest ecclesiastical historians, such as the prayer of a convert, the faith of a Christian, the patience of a confessor, or the hope and joy of a martyr, it is as rare as it is delightful and refreshing amidst the desert.

Who would give an account of the Jewish church, during the time of Christ's abode on earth, and confine all his attention to the intrigues of Annas and Caiaphas, the ostentatious formality of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the tyranny of Herod and Pontius Pilate, taking no notice of the piety and devotion of Simeon and Anna, and others who waited for consolation in Israel ? These were the true Jewish church. The others, like the images of stone in the exterior of a cathedral, are connected indeed with the church, but belong not to the assembly of living worshippers. But full and long narrations have been given of the quarrels, the controversies and the plans of the proud, ambitious, worldly, and political men, who, though they wore mitres, and

held crosiers, were utterly destitute of the spirit of the Gospel, and treated the church as a theatre in which they might display their avarice, their ambition, or sensuality. They might cry out "The church, the church!" with a voice as loud as that which exclaimed, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" but they had nothing more in view; each concealed the same meaning, "by this craft, we have our living." While these unedifying details fill the ecclesiastical page, the influence of the Gospel in converting sinners to God, the efficacy of preaching, the ardent devotions of the faithful, the persevering labours of zealous ministers, the patient sufferings of believers, and their active efforts for the propagation of the truth, pass unnoticed.

Bitter lamentations over the corruption of the age often serve merely to gratify the writer's pride, or vent his spleen. Even where they proceed from a sincere and pious disposition, these general accusations are seldom just, and are not calculated to do good. We must discriminate between believers and the men of the world, between those who apparently make it the grand business of life to follow Christ, and such as are Christians, on the same grounds as some nations are Mahometans, and other Pagans.

In consequence of previous neglects, our researches into the state of the religion of the heart among the professors of Christianity in any former period, are attended with the greatest difficulties. By two excellent men, who have lately been called away from the exercise of their ministry into the joy of their Lord, the arduous work was undertaken. Mr. Newton, whose praise is in all the churches, proceeded no farther than

to the end of the first century. By the sacred writers, he was furnished with abundance of the best materials, and he used them with skill and with success. His volume is truly valuable; and as it will be difficult to find one which can equally claim the appellation of a Christian church history, it is to be regretted that the author did not finish the work. Mr. Milner, of Hull, brought down the history of the church to the Reformation, but not with equal liberality, nor with equal success. His unfeigned piety every where appears, but his materials were scanty and defective. To produce a spiritual history, he makes large extracts from doctrinal and devotional treatises, which renders his volumes rather the biography of individuals than a history of the community of believers.

There still remain sufficient sources of information, from which may be formed a tolerably accurate judgment of the state of spiritual religion among the Dissenters. The members of the congregations, during this period, had lived in the days of persecution, when their religion exposed them to the risk of losing both their liberty and their substance, and to the certain loss of their reputation and influence in civil society. Had they been ignorant men, obstinate prejudice might have been supposed to bind them fast to the faith of their progenitors; but few in any age were better instructed in the doctrines and duties of Christianity. While they were contented to suffer for their profession, always to be despised on account of their singularities, and frequently to endure very serious injuries, it is not an unfair conclusion that the state of religion among them was prosperous.

In the whole history of the Christian church, it would be difficult to find so great a number of ministers in any one religious community, by whom the principles usually denominated evangelical were generally preached, as the Non-conformists, whose faith had stood the test of persecution, and who, one after another, finished their course during this period. Though few survived to the next, those who entered into their labours brought forward the same doctrine; for congregations so intelligent, and so pious, would receive nothing else. The publications of dissenting ministers of this time, the dissenting biographies, and the testimony of aged Christians, who received from the ancients of the preceding generation an account of what they knew of those men, all unite to confirm the assertions which have been made of their soundness in the faith and their devotedness to Christ.

As their doctrine was purely evangelical, their manner of presenting it was well adapted to promote the true end of preaching. The old Puritan mode was the original pattern, which was adopted by the Non-conformists, who were still filling the pulpits. The younger race of dissenting ministers retained the great outlines of the method, but improved it by a diminution of the number of subdivisions, in imitation of the later pieces of some of the Non-conformists, and of the works of Tillotson, Barrow, and Stillingfleet, in the establishment.

The earliest dissenting preachers insisted chiefly on the most important subjects; and the minds of the

hearers were habitually recalled to the view of redeeming love. The efficacy of this is incalculable. Topics of inferior moment, however ably and ingeniously treated, wanting force and persuasion, the effect produced is feeble on the hearts either of sinners or of saints.

Dissenting sermons contained much exposition of Scripture. In illustrating one passage by another, and searching deeply into the meaning of the sacred Oracles, they have not been excelled in any age of the Christian church. As it rendered honour to the Spirit of God, by holding up his truth before the eyes of their hearers, he honoured them, and made their discourses effectual for the salvation of sinners and edification of believers. Of that simplicity of manner, perspicuity of representation, and familiarity of illustration, which is calculated to make a strong impression on the people, an example will be found in the posthumous discourses of one who lived through more than half this period, John Howe; they were taken from his lips, and published from the manuscripts of those who copied them.

A close and pungent application of the doctrine to the conscience closed these sermons in a way which has seldom been equalled, never excelled. The manner of the preaching was warm, affectionate, and animated. To this, we should unite the public prayers of the dissenting ministers. They had learned, in the school of persecution, to wrestle mightily with God, and seek from him the comfort which was denied by man. From this school they brought into the sanctuary of God a holy unction, which penetrated deeply into the hearts of the people, and produced effects highly beneficial to the interests of pure religion.

A great improvement in psalmody, during this period, took place among the Dissenters. The form of this part of worship, as it has been conducted in the British empire, was, if we may credit Heylin, imported from the continent of Europe, and had its origin in France. When a metrical translation of the Psalms of David, by Marot and Beza, was first published, it became fashionable at court, by the countenance of the king and queen, who used to sing them to tunes which they had before learned. It was afterwards adopted by the professors of the reformed religion in every part of the kingdom; and by their influence was received into other countries which had embraced Calvin's system of doctrine and of church government. The English, at first, followed the mode of chanting psalms, and hymns, and anthems, which the reformers had learned from the church of Rome.

The Puritans learned at Geneva the method, which they perhaps liked the better, because it differed from the Romish form. They brought back with them a predilection for singing the praises of God in metrical compositions, according to the foreign Protestant practice, and it seems they had influence sufficient to procure its adoption by the English church. Of this, Heylin bitterly complains, as a "Presbyterian trick." But whatever was its origin, it established itself as a part of public worship; and, for nearly a century and a half, was the general usage, as well of the Episcopal church, as of every other sect. During that time, the Protestant people of England were Christians in the other parts of their worship; but in their praises, were little better than Jews. Many eminent believers, who joined in the pub

lic worship for fifty years, never sang the name of Jesus, till they arrived in Heaven: nor was the manner less defective. The uncouth rhymes of Hopkins and Sternhold* grated the ear from every desk; and the tedious drawl of every syllable, far beyond the bounds of edification, was heard from every pew.

The Non-conformists, for some time, courted this rugged muse. Some of them, afterwards, used the Scotch metrical translation. A version by Bishop Patrick, who was more skilful in composing prayers than psalms, was employed by many congregations. The labours of Mr. Barton supplied the psalmody of others; while Tate and Brady furnished better poetry for such as chose to adopt their translation. But all these wore a Jewish garb, and there was still wanting a collection of hymns suited to the worship of Christians. Why devotional passages in the Christian Scriptures should not be sung in metre, as well as the Psalms of David, no satisfactory reason can be given.

Dr. Watts had the honour to introduce the salutary change. Living at Southampton, after he had concluded his academical studies, his correct ear and elegant taste were offended with the rude psalmody there. As he complained of its defects, his father, who was a deacon of the church, desired him to try if he could amend it. A hymn was, therefore, composed, and being sung, was approved. Another was asked, and another, and thus a volume was gradually formed, recommending itself to the various dissenting congregations throughout

* That this antiquated version should still be used in many churches, must excite astonishment in all who do not consider that established churches do not keep pace with the improvements of the age.

England, and was in time adopted as by general consent. Since then, many collections, of various merit, have appeared; but the captains who now conduct their vessels to the West Indies do not share the honour which is due to Columbus.

The spiritual improvement to be derived from such a manual of devotional psalmody, deserves to be mentioned among the means of advancing pure religion in the heart. The Doctor endeavoured, at the same time, to introduce a quicker, and more lively, and animated manner of singing, which, while it was more pleasing to the ear, tended more powerfully to draw forth the affections in love, and gratitude, and joy*.

We may form a judgment of the state of religion by the conduct of those who profess to be Christ's disciples. There is a decent behaviour, not uncommon in the world, which preserves men from gross and open vices; but, from this, nothing certain can be deduced; because it discovers no particular veneration for God, nor regard for his authority. There are, however, practices which give decision to character, and lead impartial judges to form a favourable opinion. As the principles of Dissenters were good, should their practice be found to correspond, the conclusion must be to the honour of their religious profession.

There are two practices which may be considered as peculiarly marking the character, and distinguishing those, who observe them, from the men of the world—

* The effects of Dr. Watts's sacred poetry in purifying the taste must have been considerable. It was in constant use. It was read at every meeting for worship. Children laid it up in their memory; and grown people repeated it, in order to treasure up its ideas. It, of course, affected their language in prayer, and in conversation on religious subjects.

family worship, and the sanctification of the Lord's-day. If family worship is seldom or never performed; and if, after the public worship of the Sabbath, the remainder of the day is given up to business or pleasure, what is there to stamp the man as a Christian, and to distinguish him from "the world which lieth in wickedness?" Whatever he may be as a member of civil society, he will, by the mass of religious people, be excluded from the number of the disciples of Christ. It was, however, the general custom among the Dissenters, for the master of the family to call his household together, to read the Scriptures for their instruction, and to offer up prayer and praise to God. Where they had the requisite skill, they made a pleasing addition by the singing of psalms and hymns. The whole of the Lord's-day was devoted to the services of religion. After attending public worship, Dissenters devoted the rest of the sacred time to the instruction of their families, and to the private and secret exercises of devotion. The complaints of the tediousness of such a day, to the younger branches of a family, will be found destitute of foundation, where children have been trained up to it from their earliest years.

If it should be asked what peculiar excellence shall be assigned to the Dissenters, without hesitation we answer, "their attention to the secret exercises of devotion." Morning and evening, they had their seasons of retirement; and, according to their degrees of leisure or piety, half an hour, an hour, or more was employed in reading the Scriptures, in perusing the most spiritual writings, chiefly of the Puritans and Non-conformists, in meditation, in self-examination, and in prayer. From

these employments, they came forth into the bosom of their family and to the duties of their station in society, with a reverence for God which communicated sanctity to their temper, and integrity to their conduct.

If there be nothing in our deportment by which we can be distinguished from those who evidently take no pains to regulate their lives by the Gospel, there is reason to fear that the principles of religion have never renewed our hearts. When our Lord said, "Be not conformed to this world," he taught us that we must differ from others. The peculiarity of the Dissenters rendered them the butt of ridicule to the careless and profane. The younger Dissenters were subject to parental authority, and restrained from intimate familiarity with such as were reckoned improper companions of those who fear God. The whole family was laid under what were conceived to be the restraints of the Gospel.

Diligence in business was another feature in their character. Sober industry, and an assiduous pursuit of their temporal affairs, were considered as becoming their profession. There was, at the same time, a frugality, an economical arrangement of their affairs, a distance from parade and show; and they lived under, rather than above, their rank and circumstances in life. In consequence of this, a bankruptcy among them was almost unknown.

The amusements of the world, to which both the busy and the idle have recourse, for pleasure, the Dissenters of this period in general looked upon with dis-

approbation. At a card table, at an assembly, and at the theatre, a Dissenter, professing to be a man of piety, could not be found. Among the more sober delights of domestic life, they sought their pleasure. This was a general rule, and a distinguishing feature of the sect. By some, this peculiarity of conduct may be branded as unnecessary preciseness, and monkish severity; but Dissenters can vindicate their practice.

The benevolence of the Dissenters during this period may be proved. They had displayed a willingness to part with their substance for the sake of their religious profession, in the persecuting reigns of Charles and of James. To become a member of a voluntary religious society, requires liberality. For this, there were peculiar calls. Meeting-houses were almost everywhere to be built; ministers were to be supported, and the wants of the poor to be supplied; besides those occasional applications to liberality, which so frequently occur.

For the justness of this description of the Dissenters, we may appeal to the authority of Dr. Watts, who had arrived at maturity by the commencement of this period, and who, from what he had himself observed, delineates the character of the Non-conformists*. In the lives of Philip and of Matthew Henry, of George Trosse, of Mrs. Bury, and some others, the reader will find additional confirmation of what has been mentioned above.

As the final result of our investigation of the subject, it may with confidence be asserted, that, in the

* Watts's Humble Attempt, pp. 186—239.

Christian world, during this period, there was not to be found a body of people who, in proportion to their numbers, excelled the English Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, in the knowledge of the principles of the Gospel, in the uniform and persevering practice of its precepts, and in the diligent and faithful observance of its ordinances.

For the state of religion among the Quakers, during this period, the reader is referred to the following extracts from the pages of their own historian: "Now," says Gough, "a second generation being risen, and arising, amongst this society, who held the profession as the religion of their education, and not the purchase of giving up all for its sake as their predecessors had done, too many of these appeared in the danger of being carried away with the stream, and being drawn aside by the tempting prospect, into an inordinate pursuit of wealth beyond the limits of a truly religious disposition. Many admonitions and exhortations were sent forth from their meetings of discipline for exhorting their folds to vigilance, and to keep within the limits of pure religion in their temporal engagements, and under the guidance of Divine grace, which would teach them to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts. Their zealous endeavours were attended with a good effect*."

In the postscript of an epistle addressed to the society, the writer says, "As our number increased, it happened that such a spirit came in among us as was amongst the Jews when they came out of Egypt, and thus began to look back into the world and traded with

* Gough's History, vol. iii., book vi. chap. 12.

the credit which was not of its own purchasing, and striving to be great in the riches and possessions of this world; and their great, fair buildings in city and country, fine and fashionable furniture and apparel equivalent, with dainty and voluptuous provision, with rich matches in marriage, far wide from the footsteps of the ministers and elders at the beginning*.”

Gough says of Ambrose Rigge, of Ryegate, Surry, who died in the year 1704, “ he lived long enough to see, with regret, a declension in some professing the same principles of truth, in turning their attention more to great possessions in this world, to aggrandise themselves and families, than to make their calling and election sure; whereby, some meeting with disappointment in their aim, had deviated from that scrupulous regard to moral justice, which, in the beginning, remarkably distinguished the members of the society. This drew from him the following epistle to his folds. ‘ Many days and months, *yea, some years*, hath my life been oppressed, and my spirit grieved, to see and hear of the uneven walking of many who have a name to live and profess the knowledge of God in words. There are some amongst us who have not walked humbly with the Lord as he hath required, nor kept in that low estate neither inwardly nor outwardly, which becometh such as are travelling up to Zion, but have launched from the rock, which is firm and sure, into the great sea of troubles and uncertainty, where some have been drowned, and others hardly escaping, and many yet labouring for the shore with little hopes of coming at it; who have not only brought themselves in danger

* Gough's History, vol. iii. p. 479.

of suffering shipwreck, but have drawn in others, and have endangered them also, which hath opened the mouths of the enemies of Zion to blaspheme his great and glorious name, and hath eclipsed the lustre of the glorious sun of righteousness both in city and country. These things lay mightily upon me, and I may truly say, in the sight of God, I writ them in a great cross to my own will, for I delight not, nay, my soul is bowed down at the occasion of writing such things; but there is no remedy, the name of the Lord has been, and is likely to be, greatly dishonoured, if things of this nature be not stopped*.' ”

While these complaints shew, that the most pious and discerning among the Friends were awake to the evils for which they have been severely censured by others, it must not be supposed that there were no improvements in this denomination. They abandoned, during this period, many of those practices which made them appear censorious to other pious persons, and ridiculous to the men of the world.

* Gough, vol. iv., pp. 17—19.

CHAP. VII.

LIVES OF EMINENT DISSENTERS.

To descend to posterity with honour, and have a name inscribed in the annals of fame, is the aim of many, but the lot of few. The multitude are soon forgotten, and their memory perishes. An elegant sepulchral monument, loaded with the praises of the deceased, quickly ceases to interest the spectator, and is regarded as a proof, not of virtue, but of wealth.

Extraordinary actions, which affect the destinies of a kingdom, will gain a place in the page of history, and secure a lasting remembrance. Such as have been benefactors, not to their own country alone, but to mankind, will be celebrated as the friends of man, and descend, from age to age, with undiminished praise. By those who have attained the first rank in learning, or written works of genius, a renown as extensive and as durable will be acquired. But there is a select portion, consisting of such as have exhibited a conduct in a very high degree calculated to promote the honour of God and the spiritual welfare of man; or have published invaluable books on subjects of the first importance to the eternal happiness of the human race; and the preservation of the names of such men, by a record of their lives and writings, renders a valuable service to the church of God.

Such biography is recommended to us by the authority and example of the inspired writers, who, while engaged in narrating the history of the world, and of the church, exhibit a sketch of the character and conduct of the most eminent saints. The memoirs of the Patriarchs are given by the pen of the Holy Spirit, in the Old Testament, while the life of Christ, and the actions of the apostles, fill the historical part of the New. We should not perform our duty to religion, and to the Dissenters, were we not to give a rapid glance at some of their most eminent ministers and private Christians. As it was difficult to select, we have perhaps omitted names as celebrated as some which we have recorded.

SECT. I.—*Lives of Eminent Ministers.*

RICHARD BAXTER.

HE was born at Rowton, in Shropshire, November 12, 1615. His father belonged to the yeomanry, then a numerous, respectable, and independent body, employed in the cultivation of their paternal fields, and favourably placed as far above the dependence of poverty, as below the pride of wealth. The literary instruction of the son was committed to men ill qualified for the task; but his genius and application supplied the deficiency. The father's scanty estate not enabling him to send his son to the university, he was placed under incompetent private tutors.

At the age of eighteen, he was sent up to Whitehall, to learn to be a courtier; and had he pursued that course of life, his extraordinary talents would have made him a blessing to his country, or a curse. But the manners of a court not suiting his taste, he soon returned to the country and to his former pursuits. From childhood, his mind had been impressed with a sense of the importance of the salvation of his immortal soul. In his fourteenth year, by reading a book, entitled "Parsons on Resolution," he received an indelible impression of religion. A feeble body, and an infirm state of health, brought eternity near, and gave him the serious thoughts and lively views of a dying man. In this frame, he read the greater part of the writings of the English Puritans; so that, before he had studied theology as a science, he was intimately acquainted, as a Christian, with the best experimental and practical works.

When he reached the age of twenty-one, he conceived that he had but a year or two to live, and wishing, during that short space, to be as useful as possible, he took orders from the Bishop of Worcester, without being much acquainted with the controversy on ecclesiastical government and discipline. He received a license to keep a school at Dudley, and preached there for nine months, with great acceptance and success. He then assisted an aged minister at Bridgenorth, as he could in that place be free from some things which he scrupled in the church service. After continuing there for some time, he received an invitation from the inhabitants of Kidderminster, who had accused the vicar and his two curates of being unquali-

fied for their office. To escape a trial, the vicar consented to allow a maintenance to an acceptable preacher.

Where ignorance and profaneness had reigned, Baxter's labours, both in public and private, were abundant and successful. In family and personal instruction, England, probably, did not at that time produce his equal. His "Gildas Salvianus" exemplifies his own practice, and taught many others to follow it. His success was, perhaps, superior to that of any other minister in the land. When he went to Kidderminster, there was scarcely a house in a street where there was family worship; when he left it, there was scarcely a family in the side of a street where it was not; and whoever walked through the town, on the Lord's-day evening, heard everywhere the delightful sound of reading the Scriptures, and prayer, and praise. Sobriety, order, harmony, and devotion, succeeded to intemperance, impiety, and riot.

Mr. Baxter was, after two years, removed by the civil war. Almost every minister who went beyond the forms of the establishment, and was zealous for the salvation of the souls of men, was sure to feel the rage of the royal army. His house was plundered, his person was injured, and his family treated in the most barbarous manner, by a rabble, who, with little discipline and no pay, were allowed to pillage the property of such as were unfriendly to Charles's cause.

To avoid their fury, Mr. Baxter was prevailed on to retire to Coventry, where the Parliament protected thirty ministers who had sought refuge. For two

years, he preached to the garrison, and to the inhabitants, when, to put a stop to the errors which began to prevail, he went into the army, and was appointed chaplain to Whalley's Dragoons. After successfully following the camp for some time, an alarming and dangerous illness obliged him to leave it; and when he recovered, he returned to Kidderminster.

At the Restoration, the former wicked incumbents were all let loose upon their unhappy flocks; Mr. Baxter was therefore compelled to resign his charge. He would gladly have become the curate, but Bishop Morley would not allow him to preach there, or in any part of his diocese; and when Mr. Baxter intreated liberty to officiate in some village which had no endowment, the bishop replied, "they had better be without any, than have you to preach to them." Morley has since answered for that speech, and for the rest of his conduct, to the chief Shepherd. The two years of remaining liberty, after the Restoration, Mr. Baxter was obliged to spend in London, where his labours were a blessing.

The Act of Uniformity separated him from the church of England. Soon after his ordination, scruples began to arise in his mind respecting some of the rites required in the established worship, and his objections increased in proportion as he investigated the subject. A latitude in all these things had been promised by Charles, in his declaration from Breda; but integrity had no place in his heart. The conferences at the Savoy, in which Mr. Baxter took a principal part, were merely for show, and the terms of con-

formity were made more rigorous than before. Though a bishopric was offered to him, he would not accept it, and when the fatal Bartholomew Act was passed, he became a Non-conformist.

During the persecution, he lived at Acton, and preached to many or to few, as circumstances would permit. When an indulgence was given, he came to London, and preached. Repeated vexations, fines, imprisonments, and loss of goods, fell to his lot, and one of his imprisonments lasted nearly two years.

Though the revolution gave him the liveliest joy, his strength for labour was almost gone. As long as he had health, he assisted Mr. Sylvester, at his meeting-house in Blackfriars; and when his infirmities rendered him unable to go abroad, he received all who would come to his own house, and attend on his family worship. Worn out with weakness and affliction, he finished his course on the 8th of December, 1691, in the seventy-sixth year of age.

He was tall and thin, and his countenance was remarkably expressive. His mind was acute, penetrating, and comprehensive; his judgment was sound and impartial; his imagination, lively and prompt; and his affections, ardent to a degree that exposed him to censure. Ample stores of knowledge, acquired by the most laborious study, furnished him with materials for every subject which he was called to investigate. Though he never was at an university, not one in a thousand of those who are decorated with all collegiate honours will be found his equal.

Some men, possessed of all his talents, have passed through life with little notice. Through indolence, and

impatience of labour; they have spent almost all their days in silence. But, in Richard Baxter, to talents was united an energy of character which has seldom been surpassed. By it, he was kept in perpetual action. In preaching, writing, conversation, counsel, and other active labours, he was always doing good. He lived in an age of storms, of violence, of oppression, and persecution; but his soul was equal to the times.

He was justly accounted one of the greatest writers of his age. His publications mark the energy of his character; and they are all works of business, calculated and designed to do good. The quantity of composition is astonishing. Dr. Calamy enumerates four folios and fifty-eight quartos, besides single sermons; forty-six octavos and twenty-nine duodecimos, with occasional sheets and prefaces to other men's books: and yet composition never took him off from preaching, and the other active parts of the pastoral care.

His controversial pieces were numerous; but sometimes, in his anxiety to avoid one extreme, he verged toward another. His metaphysical head was so subtle in its distinctions and definitions, that his opponents frequently mistook his meaning, and, in their turn, charged him with heresy. Sometimes he grew angry, and carried matters to an extreme; sometimes he was in haste, and did not take sufficient pains to investigate the subject, or to present it in the most eligible form; and sometimes he attempted to reconcile systems which cannot be reconciled.

His doctrinal and practical works are much more valuable, and display his mighty talents to greater advantage. Here we find every principle of evangelical

religion stated with precision, confirmed by powerful arguments, and pressed home on the conscience, with a pungency and force which were eminently his own.

In devotional compositions, he peculiarly excelled. His simple, unadorned language presents ideas flowing from a soul burning with the most ardent love to God and man: the soul of the reader is penetrated with the divine eloquence, and his affections raised to heaven. There are parts in his "Saints' Rest," in his "Reformed Pastor," in his "Dying Thoughts," and in the applications of his sermons, to which it will not be easy to find anything superior in the English tongue.

Among his brethren in the ministry he acquired a beneficial ascendancy, by which he drew them into an association, highly profitable both to them and to their flocks. Being himself moderate in respect to forms of church government, he prevailed on his neighbours, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, to unite with him; and, by his influence, everything was conducted with harmony and love.

In London, where he mingled with the first characters, his pre-eminence was still maintained. Manton, Bates, Howe, all appear to have looked up to him as their superior. He was one of those uncommon persons who are born to bear sway in their circle, not by coercion or intrigue, nor by authoritative claims of domination, but by pre-eminence of intellect and goodness, and their natural, legitimate, irresistible influence over the mind. The mainspring of all his labours, and his influence, was his exalted piety. It appeared early in life, it grew with his growth, and advanced with his years. It was daily fed by the sacred Scriptures, by

meditation and prayer. It gathered energy from frequent and almost habitual infirmities; it was strengthened by suffering and persecution; and it enabled and disposed him to live "as seeing him who is invisible, and having respect to the recompense of reward." It gave an energy to his preaching, a pathos to his writings, and brought down a blessing on all his labours.

A striking instance of his power was displayed when he was preaching at St. Dunstan's. Some of the plaster falling down from the ceiling, the congregation alarmed, began to hurry out of the church; but he sat down undismayed, and when the tumult had subsided, he rose and addressed them thus:—"We are in the service of God, to prepare ourselves, that we may be fearless at the great noise of the dissolving world, when the heavens shall pass away, and the elements melt with fervent heat: the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." The close of his life was that of an eminent saint. Amidst the sharpest pains, when he was praying for relief, he would check himself, and say, "It is not fit for me to prescribe; Lord, when thou wilt, what thou wilt, how thou wilt." As his end drew near, being asked by a friend what was the state of his mind, he replied, "I bless God I have a well-grounded assurance of my eternal happiness, and great peace and comfort within."

JOHN FLAVEL.

This eminent divine, who was descended from the third great officer who came over with William the Conqueror, had yet nobler ancestors. His father, Mr. Richard Flavel, was a Christian so eminent, that those

who were familiarly acquainted with him declared they never heard one vain word from his lips; and a minister, so honoured by his Lord, that he was allowed to bear the cross after him, and suffer the loss of all things for his name's sake. At the restoration, he took refuge in the house of his son, the subject of this memoir, and just before the ejectment of the Non-conformists, preached on Hosea vii. 9,—“The days of visitation are come; the days of recompense are come: Israel shall know it.” For his close and faithful application, he was seized and taken before the magistrates. He afterwards exercised his ministry in London, where he was imprisoned, during the time of the plague, of which he died.

John Flavel, his eldest son, was born in Worcestershire. Having made eminent advances in classical learning, he was entered a commoner in University College, Oxford. As rector of Deptford, in Devon, he took a generous method of relieving himself of the care, and his ministry of the odium, arising from the Jewish system of tithes. He afterwards gave another proof of his self-denial, and superiority to filthy lucre, by removing to the seaport of Dartmouth, where, though his living was inferior in value, his sphere of usefulness was greatly enlarged. Here he laboured with distinguished success. One of his judicious hearers says of him, “I could say much, though not enough, of the excellence of his preaching; and that person must have a very soft head, or a very hard heart, or both, that could sit under his ministry unaffected.”

After the Act of Uniformity had deprived him of the

legal title and temporal support, he still retained his relation of pastor to the flock at Dartmouth; for, judging their souls too precious to be tamely abandoned at the nod of power, he preached and administered the ordinances of religion to them in private. But when the Oxford Act banished him and his brethren five miles from any corporation, he was compelled to leave Dartmouth, to the excessive grief of his flock, who followed him to a short distance from the town, where they parted with floods of bitter tears. He then preached at the family seat of the Rolles, about five miles from Dartmouth, confining his labours, at first, to the solemn hour of midnight, when the great hall of the mansion was crowded by those who hungered after the Gospel, and preferred it to their midnight slumbers. He afterwards preached, every Lord's-day, to those of his charge who came out of Dartmouth to him, and sometimes slipped into the town to exhort and animate others. He often narrowly escaped his enemies, but especially when preaching in a wood near Exeter.

Availing himself of King Charles's indulgence, he preached, for some time, openly at Dartmouth. But when the fires of persecution were rekindled, he went to London by sea, being rescued from a tremendous storm, in answer to prayer, of which deliverance he had a remarkable premonition. In London, he was snatched from the more dangerous floods of ungodly men and persecutors, in a distinguishing manner; and, as he resisted all invitations to settle in that city, he returned to Dartmouth. Here, when James II. relieved the Dissenters from the oppression of the penal

laws, his flock erected for him what may be called a large place of worship. But the edifices reared for the most eminent of the Non-conformists, confute the vulgar notion of the superior usefulness of good ministers in an establishment; for it is evident, that only a small proportion of the parish had learned to love Christ above all, while the vast majority were contented to hear the wretched hirelings who succeeded many of the ejected ministers.

When permitted to reside at home, and attend to his charge, he quietly walked with God, as on the borders of heaven. In the account of his personal religion, which his diary contains, we have a window opened, through which we see the habitation of God in the soul of man. In prayer, he scarcely ever used the same expression twice, and always seemed to exceed himself. His treatise on the Soul of Man contains a remarkable anecdote of a minister, which is usually supposed to be a modest imitation of the apostle Paul, who related his own exalted honours in the third person. From this relation, it appears that Mr. Flavel spent a day in such intercourse with heaven, as overwhelmed the powers of nature, and seemed, for a time, to bring him to the verge of the grave. Many years after, he used to call that one of the days of heaven, and declared he learned from it more of the heavenly life than from any books or discourses. His usefulness was great, and in some instances very remarkable. He was called to attend, on board a ship from Poole, a youth who had cut his own throat, and stabbed himself in such a manner that his recovery was thought impossible. But his almost miraculous recovery gave him an opportunity of show-

ing that Mr. Flavel's attention had been the means of rescuing his soul from the perdition into which he had attempted to plunge himself. From his bookseller, Mr. Flavel received a delightful account of the conversion of a gentleman, from dreadful profaneness, by reading his treatise "on the Keeping of the Heart." But to do good, and receive evil, is the lot of the genuine disciples of him who died for his enemies. While Mr. Flavel was engaged in an exercise of peculiar devotion, interceding for the inhabitants of Dartmouth, some of them, headed by the magistrates, who were themselves, says Grainger, the lowest of mankind, carried through the town the effigy of Mr. Flavel, to which was fastened the Bill of Exclusion and the Covenant. They committed the whole apparatus to the flames, amidst the shouts and curses of the profane. When the good man was told what had happened, he replied, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But he now hastened towards that happier world, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. His last sermon was a very animated discourse at Ashburton, on his way to Exeter, whither he afterwards went, and presided as moderator of the assembly convened to form a union of Presbyterians and Independents. At the completion of this work, on which he had set his heart, he seemed to pour forth all the remaining energies of his soul, in the most exalted strains of prayer and praise. On the same evening, he was seized, after supper, with a paralytic stroke, of which he died, June 26, 1691, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. Though his funeral displayed the high esteem in which he was held, bigotry pursued him

beyond the grave; for his epitaph, written in Latin, on a brass plate, which was first in the parish church of Dartmouth, was taken down by order of the magistrates. It was then transferred to the meeting-house, its proper place; but his true record is on high.

Of Mr. Flavel's learning, his works contain sufficient evidence; and his printed sermons, which are a model for preachers in the present day, prove him to have been master of that species of eloquence which reigns over the heart. Without any remarkable stretch of thought, his ardent evangelical affections give to his works a deserved pre-eminence in the esteem of the wise and pious*.

WILLIAM BATES, D.D.

The father of this eminent divine was a physician. The son, born in November, 1628, and educated at the university of Cambridge, obtained the degree of bachelor of arts, and, thirteen years after, that of doctor in divinity. The Act of Uniformity deprived him of the valuable living of St. Dunstan's in the West, though he might have been promoted to a deanery, and from thence to a bishopric in the establishment, if he had chosen to abandon his principles. But, with that mildness and candour, which breathe in his writings, he displayed heroic firmness, on this trying occasion. In his farewell sermon to his parishioners, he says, "I know you expect I should say something concerning my non-conformity. I shall only say thus much:—it is neither fancy, faction, nor humour, which makes me not comply, but merely the fear of offending God."

* See his life, prefixed to his works, in 2 vols. folio.

He afterwards became pastor of a congregation at Hackney, near London ; and was, for many years, one of the Tuesday lecturers at Salters' Hall, where his popular talents drew immense crowds. On the accession of William to the throne of Britain, Dr. Bates presented to him an address of congratulation from the dissenting ministers of London and its vicinity, and delivered two speeches, the first to the King, the other to Queen Mary.

On the death of the Queen, Dr. Bates performed a less welcome duty, in preaching a funeral sermon for her majesty, and presenting to the afflicted king the address of condolence from the Dissenters, which stands among his works as the production of his pen. Hence it was observed by Mr. Howe, that " his concern lay not only with mean men (though he knew how to condescend to the meanest), he was to stand before kings. It is well known in what relation he stood to one, as long as was convenient for certain purposes (for he was, at the restoration, nominated chaplain to Charles II.); and how frequent occasions he had of appearing, never unacceptably, before another, William, whose queen made his writings the companions of her closet." Many also of the most distinguished persons in the kingdom cultivated his friendship, among whom Archbishop Tillotson is particularly mentioned.

Towards the close of life, he seems to have laboured under the disadvantages of weakness and ill health ; for, twelve years before his death, he said, in his admirable funeral sermon for Dr. Jacomb,—“ Oh, frail and faithless life of man ! Who would have thought that Dr. Jacomb, whose natural vigour and firm com-

plexion promised a longer continuance here, should have a period put to his days, and that I should survive, whose life has been preserved for many years, like the weak light of a lamp in the open air?" He lived, however, to the age of seventy-four.

Mr. Howe, who was then at the distance of two hundred miles, was called to London, to preach his funeral sermon, which is in the best style of that great man, and is dedicated to the Duke of Bedford, on account of the high esteem which he entertained for Dr. Bates. Unhappily, Mr. Howe gives no biography of his friend, with whom he had been acquainted forty years. He has, however, furnished us with an admirable portrait of the man. "A handsome and commanding person was adorned with the charms of elegant manners, which gave him a kind of natural claim to the elevated society among whom he was often welcomed. He united, in an eminent degree, the venerable with the lovely; so that to him may be applied his own words concerning Alderman Ashurst,—‘a constant serenity reigned in his countenance, a visible sign of the divine calm in his breast, the peace of God which passeth all understanding.’ His memory, which suffered no apparent decay till the advanced age of seventy-four, was so vigorous, that when he had delivered an elegant speech, without having penned a word, he could afterwards repeat it to his friends verbatim. His sermons, which are neither short nor unstudied, he delivered from memory; to which he said he was, in some measure, induced, by the hope of alluring young preachers to avoid the chilling use of notes." He has combined the acute perceptions of a metaphysician, and the sound judgment of

a grave divine, with the glowing imagination of a poet. His eloquence, which, like that of the ancient classics, has not become antiquated by the lapse of more than a century, must, to his contemporaries, have been singularly fascinating. But, from the same cause, his style now glides over the mind with the smoothness of the moderns, instead of rousing with the rude energy of the old Puritans. In a day, which presented many extraordinary examples of successful labour, in almost every department of knowledge, the learning of Dr. Bates was pre-eminent. Such was his acquaintance with books, that Mr. Howe pronounces him a living library; and adds, that one who was as great a pillar, and as bright an ornament, to the church, as ever it had, was known to say, that were he to collect a library, he would as soon consult Dr. Bates as any man he knew. These costly talents were humbly consecrated on the altar of God; for his exalted piety turned everything he touched into religion. Persons of high rank, who often consulted him, acknowledged that they received from him such serious hints as required a rare union of talents and religion to convey to the great. "Into what transports of admiration of the love of God have I seen him break forth (says Mr. Howe), when some things, not immediately relating to practical godliness, had taken up great part of his time! How easy a step did he make it from earth to heaven! With what high flights of thought and affection was he wont to speak of the heavenly state!—Like a man much more akin to the other world than this. Let those who often visited him say, whether he did not usually send them away with somewhat that tended to better their

spirits, and quicken them in their way heavenwards." For the elegance of his mind, and the gentleness of his temper, for the manner in which he was regarded, both by his own and the opposite party, Dr. Bates may be called the dissenting Melancthon *.

PHILIP HENRY, A.M.

Philip Henry was so pre-eminent in worth, that it would have been high honour to any man to have been his son; but he was blessed with such a son, that posterity reveres him as the father of Matthew Henry.

John Henry, the father of Philip, coming from Wales, became servant to Charles I., and was much esteemed for his fidelity to that unhappy monarch. He married Mrs. Margaret Rochdale, of Westminster, a woman of eminent piety, by whom he had the son who is the subject of this memoir. He was named after Philip, Earl of Pembroke, his sponsor in baptism. Charles II., and his brother the Duke of York, were the playmates of his boyish days; but though they promised him great preferment, they were the scourges of his maturer years. Mr. Henry adored the kind Providence which snatched him from the pollutions of a court; but his friends attributed to these early connexions the elegant polish of his manners.

He received his education under the happiest auspices, for he was placed at Westminster School, and committed to the care of Mr. Thomas Vincent, who gave himself so heartily to the improvement of his scholars, that it threw him into a consumption; and

* See Howe's Funeral Sermon for Dr. Bates. The Non-conformists' Memorial.

thus, Mr. Henry was accustomed to say, that he killed himself with false Latin. The celebrated Dr. Busby was afterwards his tutor, under whom he became eminent for his attainments in languages. The doctor, meeting Mr. Henry, after his ejection from the establishment, said, "Who made you a Non-conformist?" "You, sir," replied he. "I made you a Non-conformist!" "Yes, sir: you taught me those principles which forbade me to violate my conscience." While at this school, he was, in compliance with the request of his mother, allowed to attend the ministry of Mr. Marshall, which was the means of Mr. Henry's early piety.

From Westminster he removed to Christ Church, Oxford, where he yielded to the parliamentary visitors in these words:—"I submit to the power of the parliament, in the present visitation, as far as I may, with a safe conscience, and without perjury." At college, however, finding most learning where there was least religion, his literary ardour betrayed him into evil connexions, and gave occasion for this memorandum,—"*Elanguescere mox cæpit pristinæ pietatis ardor.*" But he adored God, that his grace rescued him by a second conversion. Dr. Owen, when vice-chancellor, noticed Mr. Henry's college exercises with high approbation; and those who had seen him in the seat of the Muses, were afterwards charmed to observe with what simplicity he stooped to preach to rustics. Some of his Latin verses are among the poems which the university published on the peace with Holland: but when he revisited Oxford, he inserted in his book, as no doubt God did in his, "A Tear dropped over my University Sins."

He was first settled at Worthenbury, in Flintshire, where he was ordained by Presbyters, and laboured with such ardour, that through all the country he was known by the name of Heavenly Henry. Here he married Catharine Matthews, of Broad Oak. She was heiress to a good estate, which promoted the temporal comfort of her husband, and enabled him not only to preach the Gospel freely, but also to relieve many ministers in the day of persecution; while the personal excellencies of his wife were a constant theme of gratitude. She bore him two sons, John and Matthew, and four daughters. John died young; but his son Matthew records, with interesting minuteness, the beautiful order of religion which was established in his paternal abode.

At the restoration, Philip Henry was first deprived of his usual sphere of labour, and afterwards expelled from the establishment. He says, "Our sins have made Bartholomew-day the saddest day for England since the death of King Edward VI.; but even this for good." Though his son Matthew says, "we see not how," *we* have lived long enough to see how. Hunted from his home, into prisons and corners, by the Conventicle and Five-mile acts, he was at first very scrupulous of preaching out of the establishment, for which he retained a strong predilection; so that, when the indulgence was granted, he hesitated to use it, observing, that none but the Independents were very glad of it; and he feared to turn Independent in practice, by setting up a separate meeting. But the rod of persecution afterwards taught him more just sentiments concerning establishments, dissent, and practical independency. Hence, when a new scene opened upon Dissenters, by King

James's declaration for liberty of conscience, Mr. Henry immediately availed himself of it; answering the scrupulous objections of those who feared that it was only designed to favour the Papists, by observing, that to preach the Gospel of Christ was to outshoot the Papists with their own bow.

In the new commission for the county of Flint, he was surprised to find himself nominated a justice of the peace. A reverend gentleman of the neighbourhood had before told him, that he hoped himself shortly to be in the commission, and then he would rid the country of Mr. Henry; but the latter refused the opportunity of revenging or defending himself, by accepting the proffered honour. He now fitted up an out-building of his own, and held constant worship there, preaching like one who had renewed his youth as the eagle. He preached around the country, on the working-days, riding, after having delivered one sermon, six or eight miles, to preach another. The success which attended his efforts, and the happy settlement of all his children, crowned his latter end with gladness.

But his labours hastened his rest; for now writing to a friend, who anxiously enquired after his health, he says, "I am always weary, and expect no other, till I lie down in the bed of spices." After preaching on the Lord's-day, with his usually vivacity and energy, he was seized, on Tuesday, with the fatal sickness. When Mr. Matthew Henry arrived from Chester, he said to him, "Oh son, you are welcome to a dying father; I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Some time after, while his son supported the head of the dying parent, he said to him,

“ Son, the Lord bless you, and grant that you may do worthily in your generation, and be more serviceable to the church of God than I have been.” He then said, “ O death, where is thy sting ?” and, after sixteen hours’ illness, slept in Jesus, June 24th, 1696; having lived sixty-five years, and preached forty-three. His character was one of the finest, and most edifying, which the annals of the church contain; and his sayings, which form a chapter in his biography, remind us of the sacred text,—“ The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened in a sure place*.”

JOHN HOWE, A.M.

Loughborough, of which his father was minister, was the native place of this great man, who was born in 1630. Finding no place of rest within the limits of Laud’s ecclesiastical tyranny, the father went over to Ireland, and carried his son with him; but the war and the massacre in that unhappy country forcing him back, he settled in Lancashire. There his son acquired his classical knowledge, and was sent early to Cambridge. After continuing some years in that university, and taking his first degree, he removed to Oxford, where he commenced master of arts, and was elected fellow of Magdalen College.

He was ordained by Mr. Herle, of Winwick, assisted by the ministers of the chapels in his very extensive parish. Mr. Howe used pleasantly to observe, that few men, in modern times, had a more primitive ordination than himself. He settled at Great Torrington,

* See Life of P. Henry, by his son Matthew, and republished, with valuable additions, by Dr. Williams, of Shrewsbury.

in Devon, where his abundant services were crowned with considerable success.

Business having called him to London, curiosity led him to the chapel at Whitehall, where Cromwell, whose eyes were every where, seeing something extraordinary in this country minister, sent a person to say that he wished to speak with him, when the service was over. The Protector requested Mr. Howe to preach there, the next Lord's-day. He did every thing he could to be excused, and begged to be permitted to return home to his flock, but Cromwell would take no denial. After officiating three Sabbaths, Mr. Howe was almost compelled to become the Protector's domestic chaplain. His conduct in this difficult situation was that of an eminently wise and good man. Such was his disinterestedness, that, when applying for a favour, the Protector said, "Mr. Howe, you often come to me in behalf of others, but you never have asked one benefit for your own family." He preached a sermon against a favourite notion at court, "the efficacy of a particular faith in prayer;" but he was a man of unalterable fidelity, whom nothing could move from the path of duty.

After Oliver's death, he continued, about three months, in the service of his son Richard, and then went down to his charge at Torrington, and laboured among them till the passing of the Act of Uniformity. Soon after the restoration, he was accused of having uttered something seditious in his sermon; but, by the testimony of more than twenty of his most judicious hearers, he was cleared. Nothing, however, could free him from the effects of the Bartholomew Act, and he retired from the station of a parish minister, to be a

silenced Non-conformist. For several years, he was an itinerant preacher in the habitations of his friends. In the year 1665, he endured an imprisonment of two months in the Isle of St. Nicholas. When released, he continued in the west, exercising his ministry from place to place, as the times would allow. Seeing no prospect of extensive usefulness at home, he accepted an offer from Lord Mazarene to be his chaplain, and went over with him to Ireland. The demon of uniformity does not appear to have obtained so full a possession of the Irish as of the English bishops of that age; and Mr. Howe regularly officiated in the church of Antrim, and was occasionally admitted into the neighbouring churches.

On the death of Dr. Lazarus Seaman, 1675, Mr. Howe was called to be pastor of a church in London. For ten years, and some of them peculiarly unfavourable to religious liberty, he laboured with extraordinary acceptance in the service of his people, among whom were not a few eminent for their piety, their talents, their education, and their station in life.

The increase of tyranny at home induced him to accept an invitation from Lord Wharton to travel with him to the Continent; and after visiting many foreign parts, as the door was still shut against public usefulness in England, he took up his residence at Utrecht, where he preached statedly at his own house, and frequently in the English church.

When King James changed his maxims of government, and gave the Dissenters liberty of worship, Mr. Howe returned to his flock, and took the benefit of the indulgence. After the revolution, Mr. Howe continued

to labour among his people in Silver-street, who are said to have been a society peculiarly select. Active in every thing relative to religion, he was the powerful advocate of truth, piety, moderation, and liberality. In every part of his conduct, his entire devotedness to the service of his Master shone forth; and, in the end, he exhibited a resemblance of the sun in a summer evening, setting in mildness of glory. He died, the second day of April, 1705, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

Mr. Howe's person was the index of his mind. He was above the common size: there was a dignity in his countenance, and something unusually great and venerable in his whole deportment, which struck even strangers with reverence. His talents were of the highest order. The God of nature endued him with a soul capable of the most vigorous exertions, and the most exalted degrees of improvement. His application to study was close and unremitting; and he cultivated every branch of knowledge which could aid the pursuits of a divine. In theology, he was a moderate Calvinist, but he chiefly confined his literary labours to the great principles of religion, and set himself to illustrate those important truths in which Christians are agreed. The manner in which he formed his creed, is not unworthy of notice. By his skill in languages, he was able to examine with accuracy the originals of the sacred code. He perused the writings of the fathers and the schoolmen. He made himself master of the systems of theology drawn up by the reformers and the divines of the following age. He formed an intimate acquaintance with the works of the heathen philosophers. Above all, he studied the sacred Oracles, and from an attentive,

serious, and repeated perusal of them, drew up a system of theology for himself, which in the course of his long life he never saw reason to change.

Exalted piety filled the soul of John Howe. There are two qualities in which he was pre-eminent. He had an uprightness of soul which could not be bent from the straight line of rectitude, by promises or threatenings, by the hope of worldly benefit, or the fear of temporal evil. What appeared to him a duty, nothing could allure or deter him from performing; neither earth nor hell could induce him to commit what he thought a sin. His other excellence was magnanimity. There is in some characters a certain sublimity both of mind and heart*. In forming the character of John Howe, the God of nature and grace united the energies of both. A greater measure of intellectual, moral, and spiritual sublimity than were united in him could scarcely be found. He had his sentiments, as to lesser points in religion, and as to church government; he acted according to his own judgment, and would be guided by no other man's opinion; but his soul appears to have been filled with the great things of Christianity. He loved all good men, and loved them according to their goodness, without considering to what communion they belonged. To promote pure religion, not the interests of a party, was his grand aim. In his own soul, the great fundamental principles of the Gospel reigned, and formed the character of a Catholic Christian, above all sects and parties, uniting, and willing to unite, with all good men of every church, who were united to

* A Roman writer says of Scipio Africanus, "*nihil nisi magnum unquam nec sensit, nec dixit, nec fecit.*"

Christ, following him, and devoted to him. Some unusual displays of divine love this man of God had received; and near the close of his ministry, while he was dispensing the Lord's supper, the grace of Jesus, his Saviour, affected his soul in so powerful a manner, that it was feared he would have expired, while giving the bread and wine to the members of his church, and discoursing to them on the infinite greatness of redeeming love. With those who visited him, as he drew near the gates of heaven, he conversed as one already in the celestial state. They could not help regarding him with the veneration due to an inhabitant of heaven. His views of future blessedness were exceedingly exalted, his hopes stedfast, and his desires intense. While his earthly tabernacle was fast hastening to decay, he said to Mrs. Howe, "I think I love you as well as it is fit for one creature to love another; yet if it were put to my choice, whether to die this moment, or to live this night, and the living this night would secure the continuance of my life for seven years to come, I would choose to die this moment." Such was the chaplain of Oliver Cromwell. It has usually been conceived, that his preachers were contemptible fanatics; but none of the rulers of the house of Tudor, of the house of Stuart, or of the house of Hanover, ever had a chaplain superior to John Howe.

His works deserve the first place in the theological library, and for the last threescore years, no books in divinity have uniformly sold for so large a sum as his two folio volumes. In spite of the charm of titles, not a bishop, or archbishop's works are marked in catalogues at so high a price. One of his most celebrated

pieces is the "Living Temple." The former part has been considered by adepts in metaphysical reasoning as unequalled at the time; the latter part has been the delight of judicious Christians, as a luminous illustration of the grand principles of the Gospel of Christ. "His Blessedness of the Righteous" is a first rate performance, and contains a vast extent of thought, of learning, and of piety. It displays the author's acquaintance with the writings of the ancient philosophers; for he had their sentiments so much in his mind as to communicate a tinge of the Platonic system, which was then much in vogue at the universities. Mr. Howe, among others, appears to have been fond of it, and to have estimated it far above its real value; and he sometimes introduces it in his works, when it might better have been omitted. His "Delighting in God" is one of the purest treatises of practical theology to be found in the English language; and demonstrates Mr. Howe to have been not only a superior writer, but a most eminent Christian. "The Redeemer's Tears wept over Lost Souls," and "The Redeemer's Dominion over the Invisible World," contain a strength of reasoning, a sublimity of thought, and a pathos which it will not be easy to find elsewhere in an equal degree. No man appears to have understood the Scriptures better, or to have possessed equal skill in throwing light on a passage, by two or three words: these brief illustrations are like a sun-beam; and there is scarcely a writer in the whole compass of English theological literature, in whom a greater number of new and uncommon, but useful thoughts are to be found. His style is, in many places, stiff and involved, and in some obscure; but it

has a dignity, an energy, a splendour, and a sublimity, which produce the most powerful effects on the reader's mind.

JOHN OWEN, D.D.

The name of Dr. John Owen may seem to be placed beyond the limits of our history, as he died five years before the revolution; but as he was equally out of the catalogue of the Non-conformist's Memorial, never having been ejected from any living in the establishment, it seemed proper to give him a place in our work, that it might not be remarked, that the only very eminent person whom we have left unnoticed, was a man for whose sake the order of any history might with propriety be slightly violated.

From the last family of the five regal tribes of Wales, Lewis Owen, esq., of Llwyn, near Dolgelle, was descended, and from him sprang Henry Owen, who was, for some time, minister of Stadham, in Oxfordshire. Of this clergyman, who was reckoned a strict Puritan, the second son was John, who was admitted to the university of Oxford, when only twelve years of age. Here he pursued his academical labours with unquenchable ardour, allowing himself only four hours sleep in a night; though, alas! no holy oil fed his lamp; for he afterwards confessed with blushes, that his sole stimulus to mental exertion was the ambitious hope of rising to some distinguished station in church or state. How often has the eye of Omniscience seen this odious mildew sprinkled over the academic laurels of those who have shone with envied lustre in the church! Mr. Owen would doubtless have carried his point, had not God in mercy convinced him of the sin of aiming at his

own glory, which called him off from his former pursuits, and induced him to consecrate his future life, with all his mighty talents, to the honour of God, and the reformation of his church. This rendered him averse to the superstitious rites which Laud was then introducing into the university; and thus alienated from him all his former friends, who fled from him as one infected with Puritanism, a disease, in their eyes, more dreadful than the plague; so that he was at length obliged to leave the college. He was thus thrown into the hands of the parliamentary party, which so incensed his uncle, who had supported him at the university, that he for ever abandoned him, and settled his estate upon another person. Going to London, where he was a perfect stranger, he had to struggle with temporal difficulties under the additional burden of a troubled spirit. After he first discovered the evil of sin, this towering genius, who had been the admiration of the university, was so broken down, that, for three months, he could scarcely speak a word to any one; and, for five years, anguish of mind embittered his life. He went, one Lord's-day, to hear Mr. Calamy, at Aldermanbury church; but after waiting some time, a country minister, of whom he could never afterwards receive the least information, ascended the pulpit, and preached from Matt. viii. 26. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith," which happily removed all Mr. Owen's doubts, and introduced him to the enjoyment of that sacred peace which, without interruption, blessed all his future days.

"A merry heart doth good like a medicine," says the Royal Preacher, and Mr. Owen, now restored to

peace and vigor, wrote his "Display of Arminianism," which induced the committee for ejecting scandalous ministers, to present him to the living of Fordham, in Essex, where he laboured, for a year and a half, to the great satisfaction and advantage of the parishioners. But the inhabitants of Coggeshall, about five miles distant, invited him to be their minister; and as the Earl of Warwick, the patron, gave him the living, he consented, and preached to a very judicious congregation of two thousand persons. Here his researches into the Scriptures induced him to abandon the Presbyterian system of church government, and to adopt the principles of the Independents; so that he not only formed a congregational church upon the plan which appeared to him to be dictated by Christ in the New Testament, but became the most able vindicator of those sentiments which have so much prevailed among Dissenters.

He preached before the Parliament, on the 29th of April, 1646, a discourse on Acts xvi. 2: "A vision appeared to Paul in the night: there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." It is a bold, energetic, eloquent appeal to the wisdom and benevolence of the legislature, in behalf of those parts of the empire which were destitute of the light of evangelical instruction. The day after the death of Charles, he was called to the difficult task of preaching before the Parliament again, when he chose for his text Jeremiah xv. 19, 20: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, if thou return, then will I bring thee again, *and* thou shalt stand before me. And if thou take forth the precious from the

vile, thou shalt be as my mouth : let them return unto thee ; but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall ; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee : for I *am* with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord.” Instead of courting the favour of the ruling powers, by applauding the execution of Charles, he faithfully warned his country against imagining that a mere change of governors, or forms of government, would remedy the evils introduced by sin ; and charged the Parliament to seek the genuine eternal interests of the people over whom they ruled. Wisdom and fidelity joined to compose this discourse.

After accompanying Cromwell to Ireland, he returned to his charge at Coggeshall, but was soon called to preach again at Whitehall, and afterwards to go into Scotland. The House of Commons having presented him to the deanery of Christchurch, Oxford, he was made doctor in divinity, and chosen vice-chancellor of the university, which honourable post he filled, with singular wisdom and prudence, during five years.

In the short space of ten years after having been persecuted for his conscientious dissent, shunned by his former friends, disowned by his relations, disappointed of a good estate, driven from his college, cast upon the wide world, called to struggle with adversity under the depression of a wounded conscience ; we behold him in the enjoyment of peace “ which passeth all understanding,” exulting in the return of elasticity of mind, with health of body, filling the kingdom with the fame of his literary and religious eminence, introduced to the

esteem of the highest authorities in his country, and exalted to the first post which the church of England then knew, by presiding over that university, from whose bosom he had been driven. Biography has seldom furnished a more effectual antidote against despondency in adverse circumstances, or a more animating exhortation to follow conscience and principle wherever they may lead.

Six Latin orations, delivered at Oxford, while he presided over that university, display the doctor's talents and learning, as well as the discernment of those who selected him for this post of honour. He ruled with mild firmness, and was so far from obtruding his sentiments, as an Independent, on the university, that he gave several vacant livings to Presbyterians, and would never suffer a congregation of Episcopalians, who met opposite to his own door, in order to read the proscribed liturgy, to receive the least disturbance. Here he wrote his learned treatise on the perseverance of the saints, and other excellent works, and redeemed time for the labours of the pulpit. When Oliver Cromwell resigned the office of Chancellor of Oxford to his son Richard, Dr. Owen addressed to him a congratulatory oration*. Shortly after, Dr. Conant being elected vice-chancellor, Dr. Owen took his leave of the university with an address, which presents a singularly beautiful combination of the jealousy which a learned and laborious man feels for his honest fame, with the humility of a Christian devoted to the honour and

* It commences thus: "Minora illa sceptrā, vir amplissime, quæ manibus, quibus ipsam pene librat Europam, portasse magnus parens vester non erubuit, insurgentis gloriæ et decoris non contemnenda omīna, ad pedes tuos provolvit Academia Oxoniensis."

interests of his God. The fortunes and prospects of the university, when first it fell into the hands of the parliament party, are finely depicted; while the improvements which had been made during the five years of his chancellorship, are hinted at with much delicacy*. Owen lays down the academic fasces with a generous grace, bidding his successor welcome, and congratulating the university on the felicity of obtaining a new vice-chancellor, who rose to the honour, not by intrigues, but by modest merit, and who would amply supply the defects of his predecessor. Not the slightest intimation is given that he felt any resentment at being superseded in his office, nor the shadow of evidence furnished that the doctor was opposed to Richard Cromwell, or took any share in his deposition; and though Mr. Baxter says in his life, that Dr. Owen and his assistants did the main work of pulling down Richard, the doctor himself positively denies, and challenges all the world to prove, that he ever pulled down or set up any political party.

He now retired to his own private estate at Stadham, his birth place; but the persecution which followed the restoration, compelled him to take refuge in London, where he published his animadversions on a

* *Per primum biennium vulgi fuimus et vulgaris fabula. De discrimine nostro fortunisque communibus ex astrologorum hemerologiis et chartis Mercurialibus^a disceptatum est inter lippos et tonsores.—Nempe sic voluit summus rerum arbiter, quo minoris pretii apud mortales esset quicquid est mortale, neque imperiorum venustatem et summa totius mundi decora invadente marcore, ut florem illibatum sola gereret Academia fors an æquum erat.*

^a Alluding to the royalist Mercuries, the newspapers of that day, and to the astrologers and fortune-tellers, to whom the Stuarts, like Saul, made application, in hopes of receiving some consoling predictions.—See Grainger's Biographical History of England.

popish book, entitled, “ *Fiat Lux*,” which recommended him to the esteem of Hyde. This enemy of the Non-conformists told the doctor that “ he had deserved the best of any English Protestant of late years, and that the church was bound to own and advance him,” at the same time expressing his surprise that a man of his talents and literature should adopt the novel opinion of independency. Owen offered to prove that the Christian church knew no other system of ecclesiastical polity, for several ages after Christ, against any bishop whom his lordship should appoint to argue the question with him. This learned man was, however, so cruelly hunted by the myrmidons of the hierarchy, that he was about to accept an invitation from the Independents in New England, to preside over the college which they were establishing : but he was stopped by particular orders from the king ; and when invited to fill the chair of Professor of Divinity in the United Provinces, Owen’s love for his country induced him to waive the honour.

He set up a lecture in London, and while many eminent citizens resorted to his oral instruction, the books, which he from time to time published, gained him the admiration and esteem of the learned and the great, among whom are particularly mentioned, the earls of Orrery and Anglesea, lords Willoughby, Whar-ton, and Berkley, and Sir John Trevor. The King and the Duke of York sent for him, and conversed with him concerning the Dissenters, and liberty of conscience, which the king declared was right; and as a testimony of his sense of the injustice done to the persecuted, he gave the doctor a thousand guineas to

be distributed among the sufferers. When Owen applied to his former tutor, Dr. Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, in behalf of John Bunyan, who was enduring a long and cruel imprisonment, the bishop declined releasing the Baptist, though he had given the Independent an assurance, "that he would deny him nothing that he could legally do."

His learned labours procured him the acquaintance and esteem of many eminent foreigners, some of whom, according to the fashion of former times, took a voyage to England, to converse with this distinguished Briton; while others, having read his Latin treatises, learned our language that they might be able to read the rest of his works. When, exhausted by his excessive exertions of body and mind, he was unable to preach, he retired to Kensington, near London; but even here he was incessantly writing, whenever he was able to sit up. He afterwards removed to a house of his own at Ealing, where, employing his thoughts on the glories which were now opening upon his view, he composed his "Meditations on the Glory of Christ." Writing to a friend, at this time, he says, "I am going to him whom my soul has loved, or rather who has loved me with an everlasting love, which is the whole ground of all my consolation. The passage is very irksome, and wearisome, through strong pains of various sorts, which are all issued in an intermitting fever. All things were provided to carry me to London to-day, according to the advice of my physicians, but we are all disappointed by my utter inability to undertake the journey. I am leaving the ship of the church in a storm, but whilst the great Pilot is in it, the loss

of a poor under-rower will be inconsiderable. Live and pray, and wait and hope patiently, and do not despond, the promise stands invincible, that he will never leave us nor forsake us." He died on Bartholomew-day, 1683, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

He is described as tall in his person, with a grave, majestic, and comely aspect, and the air and "deportment of a gentleman." He has been accused of excessive finery in his dress; but it is presumed that those who deplore the vandalism which they imagine reigned in the seats of the muses, during the times of the Commonwealth, will not attribute it to Dr. Owen as a fault, that as vice-chancellor of Oxford, he appeared in full dress on solemn occasions. He is said to have been very pleasant and cheerful in his social intercourse, having a great command of his passions, especially that of anger; but in his writings, the irritation of those contentious days sometimes appears. After rising to the highest distinction, by the learning which his ambition urged him to acquire, he turned it all into religion, and consecrated the languages inscribed on the cross, to proclaim the glory of him that was crucified. Even Anthony Wood was compelled to acknowledge that "he was a person well skilled in the tongues, rabbinical learning, and Jewish rites; that he had a great command of his English pen, and was one of the fairest and genteelest writers that appeared against the church of England." His knowledge of ecclesiastical history and polemical theology was vast and profound, so that when the ancient heresies were revived under the modern names of Arminianism and Socinianism, he grasped and strangled the snakes with

more than Herculean powers. The acumen with which he detected the most specious, and the force with which he crushed the most formidable heresiarch, were, if possible, still surpassed by the accuracy with which he stated and explained the most profound discoveries of Revelation, and the sanctity with which he directed every truth to the purification of the heart. His grand work, which forms the colossal pedestal to his fame, is his exposition of the epistle to the Hebrews. To this, the studies of his life were directed, and though the epistle contains great difficulties, Owen has met them with a satisfactory solution.

This extraordinary man was as much beyond his age in political, as in theological science; for he not only defended the doctrine of toleration, while it was most cruelly violated by the Stuarts; but when the Presbyterians were in the plenitude of their power, he addressed to the Parliament a discourse in favour of this truly Christian doctrine, in which, says Mr. Orton, "he went on as large and generous principles as Mr. Locke," who was, indeed, a disciple of Owen. In him, the Independents claim as their own, the man who led the way for Locke to promulgate the beneficent principle of toleration, which is destined to bless the latter, wiser, better days of the world; whilst he proved by his numerous unanswered defences of independent churches, that the most liberal allowance of other men's religion may be associated with the nicest sense of truth, and the most vigorous exertions in her defence. Possessing a handsome estate, and labouring in the noblest employments of a literary life, Owen never

thought himself exempt from the duty of preaching the Gospel, amidst the perils of persecution*.

WALTER MARSHALL.

Having received his education at New College, Oxford, of which he was for some time a fellow, he was afterwards chosen to the same station in the college at Winchester. From the vicarage of Hursley, which lies in its vicinity, the Act of Uniformity ejected him. Providence directing his steps to Gosport, he was pastor of a congregation in that town, to the day of his death, in 1690, and his funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Tomlyn, of Andover, a fellow-sufferer for Non-conformity.

That which is the main spring of true and hallowed exertions in every part of the ministerial office, Mr. Marshall possessed in a superior degree. He was eminent for piety and devotedness to God. In his earlier years he had been greatly distressed about the state of his soul. The consciousness of guilt, and a dread of the Divine displeasure, filled his heart with bitter anguish. An inability to attain peace of conscience was the source of lasting sorrow.

His biographer appears to ascribe his long despondency to the reading of Mr. Baxter's works: but were not many others converted by that great man's writings, and brought to the enjoyment of that happiness which flows from believing in a crucified Redeemer? Besides, did not Mr. Marshall read the sacred Scriptures at the same time; and yet he re-

* Orme's Life of Owen, now prefixed to an edition of his works in twenty-one volumes octavo; which, however, do not contain the Theologoumena or Hebrews.

ceived no consolation from them? But are the Scriptures to be blamed on this account? At last, mentioning his case to Dr. Thomas Goodwin, it is supposed, and bewailing the greatness of his sins, that able divine replied, "You have forgotten the greatest of all, the sin of unbelief, in refusing to believe in Christ, and rely on his atonement and righteousness for your acceptance with God." The same observation may have been made, and he may have read it, and it may have occurred to his mind a hundred times, but without effect. The day of divine power is now come; he believes in Christ Jesus, and is filled with joy and peace in believing. Let his former inattention be ascribed to the depravity of the carnal mind, and his subsequent peace to the riches and sovereignty of divine grace.

Mr. Marshall's preaching was both acceptable and edifying to his people, who adhered to him in the gloomy days of persecution. And what deserves the peculiar attention of young ministers, nor is it unnecessary for the old, he profited greatly by it himself, and from its efficacy on his heart, he attained to eminent degrees of faith and holiness and consolation.

His book, entitled, "The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification," has been warmly recommended by divines of note, both for learning and piety. Among others, the excellent Mr. Hervey, in his "Theron and Aspasio," speaks of it in the following terms. "Mr. Marshall's treatise on Sanctification I shall not recommend in the style of a critic, nor like a person of taste, but with all the simplicity of the weakest Christian, I mean from my own experience. It has been made one of the most useful books to my own heart. I

scarce ever fail to receive spiritual consolation and strength from the perusal of it; and was I to be banished into some desolate island, possessed only of two books besides my Bible, this should be one of the two, perhaps the first that I should choose.

“Should any person, hitherto a stranger to the work, purchase it on this recommendation, I must desire to suggest one caution, that he be not surprised, if, in the beginning, he meets with something new and quite out of the common road; or, if surprised, that he would not be offended, but calmly and attentively proceed. He will find the author’s design opening itself by degrees. He will discern more and more the propriety of his method. And what might at the first view appear like a stumbling-block, will prove to be a fair and ample avenue to the palace of truth, to the temple of holiness, and to the bowers of happiness.”

Some books secure a general approbation; and there are others which charm individuals, from a certain congeniality of taste, and union of sentiments. Mr. Hervey’s critique may be allowed to originate in part from the latter source. At the same time, it must be allowed, that “The Mystery of Sanctification” discovers great closeness of thought, force of reasoning, intimate acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures, exalted piety, profound humility, and a rapturous admiration of the riches of divine grace. A want of simplicity may, not without reason, be objected; and it may be said, perhaps, that he erred in making his own views of things, his own feelings, and the dealings of God with his soul (which were in some things peculiar), the universal rule of the divine conduct in the salvation of all others. A

few ideas too, which did little injury to himself, are in danger of being abused to evil by those who have but little religion, or none at all.

Death found Walter Marshall with his loins girded about, and his lamp burning, and patiently waiting for the coming of his Lord. To those of his flock that were around him, who had come to witness his departure, he said, "I die in the full persuasion of the truth, and in the comfort of that doctrine which I have preached to you." His last words, which he uttered with the hope and joy of a dying saint, were, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." There was now an end of his contempt and persecutions for conscience sake: what remained was the reward of fidelity; and having suffered with Christ on earth, he was admitted to reign with him in heaven.

THOMAS WARREN, A.M.

The parentage of Mr. Thomas Warren is not known; but it appears that he was born in 1617, of a family devoted to the service of Christ in the Gospel. Several of his name were among the Non-conformist ministers, and one of them was ejected from the living of Romsey, the scene of his future labours. When he was thirty-three years of age, the Parliament presented him to the rectory of Houghton, in Hampshire, about eight miles from Romsey: but he did not enjoy it more than twelve years, for he was ejected by the Act of Uniformity. He was, however, so moderate a Presbyterian that when Charles was restored, perceiving that his former orders would, by Episcopalian bigotry, be deemed

invalid, he went to Scotland, and was ordained both deacon and presbyter by the Bishop of Whithern. He received episcopal letters of institution and induction to his rectory from the Bishop of Winchester, and was accordingly inducted. But, though he went so far to comply with the ruling powers, he could not swear unfeigned assent and consent to every thing in the book of Common Prayer. He therefore resigned a good living, to keep a pure conscience. He was held in so high esteem by the dominant party, that, either to avail themselves of his talents, or to take so powerful a weight out of the scale of the dissent, they offered him, as the price of his return to the establishment, the bishopric of Salisbury, or Winchester. Such, however, was his view of the terms of conformity, and such his strength of principle, that he treated these splendid mitres as Luther did the scarlet hat which was to buy him off from the Reformation. Still he lived unmolested in the worst of times, and when indulgence was granted, he took out a licence as a Presbyterian minister to preach in the house of Mr. Thomas Burbank, in Romsey. It does not appear whether he had before this preached and collected a congregation in private, or had entirely abstained from the exercise of his ministry, but the church which he then openly formed has continued and increased to the present day. Those who behold him, first resigning a large parish, and afterwards refusing two extensive bishoprics, to go at length and preach to a handful in a room, may suppose that he foolishly sacrificed the end to the means, and placed under a bushel a light which might have shone through a kingdom. But he was, on the contrary, a noble and en-

couraging example of the superior policy of acting upon principle. Had he retained his rectory, he would, most probably, have been succeeded, at death, by such men as filled the other vacancies created by the ejection, who quickly obliterated all traces of evangelical knowledge and piety, not only at Houghton, but also in many other parishes, where the genuine Gospel of Jesus Christ has not been preached, from that day to the present. Had he accepted the diocese of Sarum or Winton, the fashion of infrequent preaching, which reigned among the diocesan bishops, would have greatly abridged his usefulness, while he would have found himself perpetually in a society with which he could never coalesce. Those Presbyterians who conformed and took bishoprics felt that they were outnumbered and outweighed by prelates, whose anomalous piety had no affinity with the religion which the Puritan divines drew from the sacred Scriptures. Even Kenn, the most devout of the high-church bishops, could give absolution to a sinner like Charles, who did not even pretend to repent of his crimes, while the whole company kneeled down to receive the blessing which the king, whom they called their common father, deigned to bestow.—What a figure would Warren have made in this right reverend group? or, how could he have knelt to receive a dying benediction from the polluted hands of a hoary debauchee?

But, had he conflicted through life, amidst these opposing elements, where would have been the fruits of his labours after death? Where are now the names or the proofs of usefulness of those prelates who accepted the sees which he refused? But Warren “being dead

yet speaketh." The church which he formed in a room, in the little country-town of Romsey, has perpetuated his name, and the fruits of his ministry, through almost a century and a half. By gathering into the firm bonds of Christian communion a small society of genuine Christians, distinct from the world, he erected the standard around which the friends of pure and undefiled religion in that town, and the adjoining country, have delighted to rally. He, indeed, laboured among them only eighteen years; for he was mortal; but he formed an immortal successor, for the church which he gathered has never died; and it was so deeply imbued with the spirit of the Gospel which he preached, that it chose another and another pastor of similar principles, and by the labours of such men has been ever since maintained with constant accessions of converts to Christ.

When King James published his declaration for liberty of conscience, Mr. Warren wrote to a Mr. Leigh, in London, for advice concerning his conduct in this critical affair. His friend informs him, that "the ministers in London have shown, by their conduct, that they deem it right to use the liberty, and some of them, good manners to thank his majesty; while the smiles of the king and courtiers showed their satisfaction in receiving their address." Mr. Warren, most probably, imitated the conduct of his brethren in London, by not only availing himself of the opportunity to exercise his ministry, but also presenting an address of thanks to the king. For, in the London Gazette of this time, appears "the Loyal Address of his Majesty's Dissenting Protestant Subjects in Romsey, Ringwood, Fording-

bridge, and Christchurch," which was probably drawn up by Mr. Warren himself. They assure his majesty, that "it is not mere gilded hypocrisy, but the real sentiment of loyal verity and gratitude, which hath induced us to soar so high to crave your gracious acceptance of our serious tribute of thanks, which hath no other worth to recommend it but the truth and loyalty of those who present it. Your majesty has, to your great honour, rightly attributed to the most high God, whose deputy you are, the sole monarchy over the conscience."

After preaching for eighteen years to his flock at Romsey, which, though not large, seems always to have contained some of the principal inhabitants of the town, he resigned, in consequence of the infirmities of years. The day before his death, he said to a friend, "Now I am neither afraid to die, nor unwilling." He was interred in the south aisle of the parish church of Romsey, where is still seen this epitaph: "Here lieth the body of Mr. Thomas Warren, a learned, pious, and faithful minister of Christ in this town: he was a solid and nervous assertor of discriminating grace and freed will." From an original picture of him, which has been lately presented to the church at Romsey, it appears that his wise and learned, mild, and gentle spirit dwelt in a body of small stature, of mortified appearance, but of a keen, expressive countenance, though his eyes seem weakened by hard study.

JOHN BUNYAN.

The greater part of the first dissenting churches were furnished with pastors from the clergy who had been nursed in the bosom of alma mater; but the present

biography records a singular exception, in a man who sprang from the lowest ranks in society, and spent his earliest years in profaneness and ignorance, and manual labour.

John Bunyan was born in the year 1628, at Elston, near Bedford, of poor parents; for his father was a tinker. His early years gave no indications of future eminence; except it be thought that the native vigour of his character was proved by the depravity for which he was infamous. By cursing and swearing with infernal eloquence, he became a captain of the profane band, and sometimes even shocked those who were themselves profane. Studying to banish the thoughts of God and eternity from his own breast, he was roused to fury whenever he was reminded of religion or the fear of God. Misery, the shadow of sin, ever at its heels, though only perceived when men look back on their ways, pursued this sinner closely; so that guilty days, spent in the paradise of fools, were succeeded by nights of horror in the suburbs of hell. As if to show the obduracy of the heart on which divine grace was to display its omnipotence, mercies were mingled with terrors; for twice he was saved from drowning, and once, when he was a soldier in the civil wars, he was drawn out to stand as a sentinel at the siege of Leicester, but another having requested, for certain reasons, to take his turn, was shot through the head.

Marriage, which usually imparts a colour to future life, and deeply affects the eternal interests of men, first gave a turn to the mind of Bunyan, for the wife whom he chose was the daughter of parents who were reckoned religious. She brought with her a portion which

at once marks her poverty, and displays the happy effects of religious connexions. Two pious books, left her by her father, were all her fortune, which she probably prized, as poor people frequently do the trifles which form their whole inheritance. In these, which were entitled, "The Practice of Piety," and "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven," the newly-married couple read together, which proved the means of reclaiming the reprobate husband from some of his grosser vices.

After a series of convictions, which seemed only to plunge him into the hardened horrors of despair, he was led, by conversation with a poor man, to read the Bible. With a vast fund of mistaken religion, Bunyan now prided himself on his striking reformation and correct morals. But, being once at Bedford, he there overheard some poor women who were sitting at a door conversing on religion. He listened while they spoke of the effects of divine grace in regeneration, and of the necessity of abandoning all reliance on our own works, in order to be justified by faith in "Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." This being new to him, he opened his mind to these poor people, who led him to Mr. Gifford, the pastor of a Baptist church at Bedford. He was admitted into the communion of this church in the twenty-seventh year of his age, and now devoted his active, energetic mind to the service of his Redeemer, with the same ardour with which he had before served the destroyer.

His religious attainments soon attracted such notice, that the community which he had joined invited him

to devote himself to the ministry. After exercising his gifts in private, he was publicly ordained. The modesty and diffidence which he maintained in this flattering change of life, formed a pleasing contrast to his former impudence in sin; while his natural courage and ardour were, with undiminished energy, consecrated to a more noble object. The notoriety of his character and change drew vast numbers to listen to his preaching. A student of Cambridge, observing a multitude flock to a village church, on a working-day, enquired what was the cause: on being informed, that one Bunyan, a tinker, was to preach there, he said he would hear the tinker prate. But the tinker prated to such effect, that for some time the scholar wished to hear no other preacher, and, through his future life and ministry, displayed the triumphs of the despised Nazarene over one brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.

He cultivated that species of eloquence which is most effectual to produce conviction, but is sure to provoke opposition; and, as he formed the greater part of the Baptist churches in Bedfordshire, he was a mark for the arrows of those who hated the light which he poured in torrents on all within his reach. He had, however, preached through all the country, when the restoration gave power to his enemies, who seized and threw him into prison, where he lay for twelve years. A manuscript account of his imprisonment, written by Bunyan himself, records the high satisfaction which he enjoyed in suffering the most unjust severities for Him who had freely pardoned the enormous guilt of his former years. He felt, indeed, as a tender husband and father, for his wife and four children, one of whom was blind, and

who were all deprived of their support: but while he laboured with his hands, as far as a prison allowed, to maintain his family, he cheerfully entrusted them to the care of his God. During his confinement, he preached to all to whom he could gain access; and when liberty was offered to him, on condition of promising to abstain from preaching, he constantly replied, "If you let me out to-day, I shall preach again to-morrow." He expressly prayed that he might not be liberated, if his imprisonment would be more conducive to the Redeemer's glory; and the Pilgrim's Progress, which he wrote in Bedford jail, has extended and perpetuated his usefulness to an incalculable extent.

Being liberated, he became pastor of the Baptist church at Bedford; and when the kingdom enjoyed a portion of religious liberty, he enlarged the sphere of his useful labours, by preaching in London, every year. Here he excited great attention, and laboured with the happiest success; for, in the metropolis, what might not be expected from such a phoenix as Bunyan? On one day's notice, such multitudes would assemble to hear him, that the places of worship could not hold them. "At a lecture, at seven o'clock in the dark mornings of winter, I have seen," says one, "about twelve hundred; and I computed about three thousand, that came to hear him on a Lord's-day, so that one half of them were obliged to return for want of room."

The last act of his life was a journey of benevolence, in which he caught a cold that proved fatal. On his arrival at his friend's house in London, he took to his bed, and, after a sickness of ten days, which he bore with the high satisfaction of one who desired to depart

and be with Christ, he resigned his spirit into the Redeemer's hands, on the 31st of August, 1688, aged sixty years.

From the hour of his conversion, he maintained a purity of conduct, and elevation of character, which slander herself has never dared to assail. Instead of the vanity, or the rudeness, which too often discolour the virtues of those who, like Bunyan, have emerged from obscurity to flattering distinction, he displayed unaffected humility and gentleness, and, by taking care never to forget his former degradation, he disarmed all who would have thrown it in his teeth. He declined a tempting offer for his son, saying, that God had not called him into the ministry to make his children's fortunes. His liberality of sentiment was seen in leading the Baptist churches, which he formed, to admit pædobaptists to their communion, and the church over which he presided in Bedford has now an Independent for its pastor. His industry will be readily acknowledged, when it is known that he printed as many treatises as he had lived years. His style is rude and artless, but it is lucid as a sun-beam, and often speaks with the force of thunder. The imagination which he has displayed in the *Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Holy War*, if cultivated by learning, and devoted to the muses, would have borne him to the loftiest summit of Parnassus. The attempts which have been made to imitate, or to rival his *Pilgrim*, have only served as foils to display the superior genius of its author; for while the similar allegory of a learned bishop has been, by tacit consent, delivered over to oblivion, Bunyan's *Pilgrim* has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, has

passed through more editions than any other book except the Bible, and is now praised by the first critics, as one of the most extraordinary efforts of human genius.

TIMOTHY CRUSO, M.A.

Mr. Timothy Cruso was born about the year 1655; and was educated for the ministry, first in a dissenting academy, and afterwards at one of the universities in North Britain. The period of his entrance into the vineyard rendered him strictly a *dissenting* minister; for he was one of the second generation of pastors to the separate churches; though he died before many of those whose expulsion from the establishment rendered them the fathers of the dissent. He was chosen pastor of a church which met in Crutched Friars, London, where Mr. Fuller was his assistant. As he excelled in everything requisite to form a complete preacher,—preparing his sermons with great care and profound judgment, inculcating constantly the most important subjects, in a serious, scriptural, and practical method, and recommending them with the charms of an agreeable voice and graceful manner,—he was esteemed one of the greatest preachers of his age. His congregation therefore was large, and the church exceedingly flourishing during his life, which, unhappily for the interests of religion in this place, was short; for, at his death, an unadvised attempt to introduce a successor, contrary to the majority of votes, produced a separation, and sowed the seeds of future decay.

In addition to his constant labours among his own flock, Mr. Cruso was chosen one of the preachers of the

Merchants' Lecture at Pinner's Hall. A printed volume of the sermons which he delivered there is yet extant, and forms a handsome eulogium on the discernment of those who chose him to this post, and of those who flocked to his lectures. While his popular talents were crowned with great success, his amiable disposition and conduct endeared him, not only to his own family, but also to a very large circle of valuable friends. But the heavenly treasure was deposited in an earthen vessel, and his soul, like that of Watts, perhaps also of Paul, and some other distinguished men, was not well lodged; for his body was contemptible in its appearance, and frail in its texture. Exhausted, therefore, by the constant studies and hard labour which his indefatigable mind, ever eager to increase both his knowledge and his usefulness, imposed upon the feeble frame, he sunk under his work, in the prime of life, and died on the 26th of November, 1697, when only forty-one years of age.

The Continuation of Grainger's Biographical History of England has insinuated, that, with long devotions, he associated a fondness for the pleasures of the festive board, rather than the practice of religious austerities. But Matthew Mead, who knew him well, preached his funeral sermon, and edited the posthumous volume of his discourses, gives a different turn to his character. "If I may use the phrase in fashion, he lived too fast, not as too many do, who shorten their lives by their debaucheries and sinful excesses, but as a taper which wastes itself to give light to others. For he was a person whose worth was well known in this city; a person of sound judgment in the great doctrines of the

Gospel, and held fast the form of sound words, carefully showing the paths of those by-way-men who please themselves with the fond thoughts of such opinions, wherein they choose to walk by themselves, apart from the community of saints and the church of God."

NATHANIEL TAYLOR.

He cast in his lot among Dissenters in evil times. Possessing the two radical qualifications for the Christian ministry—piety and talents—he pursued a course of literary and theological studies, under the tuition of Mr. Edward Veal. While thus engaged, he had the happiness to attend on the preaching of Mr. Charnock, whose every-day's discourses, published in two large folio volumes, prove his genius and learning.

From a private academy, Mr. Taylor went over to Holland, and spent some time in one of her universities, attending the lectures of her celebrated professors. For a season, he exercised his ministry privately in the country; but, coming to London, he preached to a congregation which had been under the care of Mr. John Shower.

Soon after the revolution, he was chosen assistant to Richard Mayo, at Salter's Hall. He was likewise called to take a part in the weekly lecture which was carried on at his place of worship, by the most eminent Presbyterian ministers in the metropolis. In these situations he continued during the remainder of his life.

As a student, Nathaniel Taylor was a pattern of diligence and perseverance. That his preaching met with peculiar acceptance may be naturally supposed. Vivacity of thought, brilliancy of imagination, a retentive

memory, warmth of affections, fluency of expression, an agreeable voice, and a prepossessing delivery, rendered his public services uncommonly pleasing. He had a peculiar talent for awakening sinners; and when his subject called him to perform the part of a Boanerges, his words, his voice, his looks, were such as to harrow up their souls. His exhortations to families and individuals, after recovery from sickness, are spoken of as having been peculiarly suitable and impressive.

Towards Mr. Mayo, his senior, he was all respect and affection: Mr. Newman, his assistant, he always treated with the tenderness of a father, and the kindness of a friend. How many, even of great name, have failed in these reciprocal duties. The relation between a pastor and an assistant, or between an old and a young minister as co-pastors, has therefore been commonly viewed with dread, and shunned with horror. By this means, many a flourishing congregation has been ruined. The pastor, able and faithful in his day, but robbed by old age of his former energy and powers, is afraid to admit a helper; and the people drop off, one after another, never to return. An assistant, or a co-pastor, in the vigour of youth, would have retained them and increased the number; and the congregation would have enjoyed, in their united labours, the sagest maxims of wisdom, resulting from long experience, combined with the attractive vivacity and animation of youth. Is it too difficult for a minister, who has seen more than three-score years, to say of his youthful associate, "He must increase, but I must decrease?" Or is it too hard for a young minister to pay superior respect to his senior in office, and to render becoming

deference to age, and homage to more extensive observation and experience?

Nathaniel Taylor had arrived at what is accounted the prime of a minister's life, and his friends were looking forward with delight to many future years of usefulness. But, in calling away his servants, Christ acts by rules far beyond our comprehension, and often in a way contrary to our judgment. This good man had been, for years, subject to severe attacks of the gout and stone, which he bore with the spirit of a Christian, under the discipline of his heavenly Father. After the last fit of the gout, from which he recovered, when he was told by a friend that he had uttered more bitter complaints than usual, he replied, "My extremity indeed was very great, but I had not one hard thought of God; and I have received so much benefit by my afflictions, that I reckon them among the greatest mercies of my life." Soon after his recovery from a very violent attack, he was unexpectedly seized again, and speedily fell a victim to the violence of the disease.

Sudden death appears to have been his wish, and the affecting sentiments which he expressed in the funeral sermon of Nathaniel Vincent, who was removed in this way, lead us to judge that it was not to him unwelcome. "For my own part," says he, "on mature deliberation, I do not think it a desirable thing for a good man, who is ready for death, to be worn away like a stone, by a long and continual dropping. May my house and soul be in order, and then the sooner it quits this vile body, and leaves this wretched world, if in the twinkling of an eye, so much the better! To which there is but one circumstance more,

which I should desire may be added, *viz.*, that I may die preaching the everlasting Gospel, or administering the Lord's Supper. May my taper be blown out in the sanctuary! and may I pass in an instant, from serving the church militant here on earth, to join with the church triumphant in heaven! But we must not be our own choosers, and to be sure God will dispose all things in the best manner for them that are his."

He died in the beginning of May, in the year 1702. An unseen counsellor has frequently been observed to direct the thoughts of ministers to subjects peculiarly appropriate, enabling them to deliver truths remarkably suitable to themselves and to their flock. Mr. Taylor was led, for some Lord's-days immediately preceding his death, to vindicate the wisdom of providence, in the death of eminent persons, removed in the midst of their usefulness*.

His works are a "Preservative against Deism," "On the Nature of saving Faith," "An Answer to Sherlock, vindicating the Dissenters from the Charge of Schism," and three funeral sermons. After his death, was published a volume, consisting chiefly of sermons on the covenant of grace, preached at the Tuesday's Lecture, at Salter's-hall. Had such discourses always been preached there, the lecture would not have ceased for want of hearers.

BENJAMIN KEACH.

He was born in Buckinghamshire, in 1640. His pious parents were too poor to give him a liberal education. He was designed for trade, but aspired after

* See Funeral Sermon by John Shower.

literary attainments. He early devoted himself to the study of the sacred Scriptures, and was baptized, on a profession of faith, at fifteen years of age. In his eighteenth year, the society of Christians, to which he had united himself, invited him to preach the Gospel among them.

At the Restoration, he began to feel the iron rod of persecution. The troopers were employed in wreaking the vengeance of government, and some of them having seized Mr. Keach while he was preaching, bound him, and laying him on the ground, mounted their horses with the design of trampling him to death, but their officer arriving at the moment, prevented the execution of their inhuman purpose.

Having printed a catechism, entitled "The Child's Instructor, or a New and Easy Primer," into which he had naturally introduced the peculiar sentiments of his denomination, he was indicted at the assizes at Aylesbury, "for publishing certain damnable positions, contrary to the book of common prayer, and the liturgy of the church of England." The trial, which is recorded by Crosby*, was managed by the prosecutors with a violence dishonourable to the Lord Chief Justice Hyde, who then sat on the bench. The jury was almost compelled to find a verdict of guilty; and Mr. Keach was sentenced to stand in the pillory at Aylesbury, and at Winslow, to have his book burnt by the hands of the hangman, and to pay a fine of twenty pounds. So formidable, in those days, was a little Baptist catechism!

Having endured the punishment of the law, or rather

* Vol. ii., p. 186.

of the court, he continued, for four years, to preach in those parts; but finding no rest from informers, he determined to seek refuge in London. On his way, he was robbed, and, with his wife and family, entered the metropolis penniless, and almost unknown. But he was soon taken notice of, and, in a few months, ordained pastor of a small congregation which met in a private house in Tooley-street. They afterwards built a commodious meeting-house in Horsely-down.

In the earlier part of life, Mr. Keach was an Arminian; but after his arrival in London, he began to examine the sentiments of the general and particular Baptists, and the result was, the adoption of the Calvinistic system, for which, as he advanced in years, he became peculiarly strenuous.

He continued with his flock during the remainder of his life. The congregation gradually increased, so that they were under the necessity of repeatedly enlarging the place, till it would contain, Crosby says, a thousand people. His qualifications for the ministry were considerable; and his temper and conduct adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour. He died on the 18th of July, 1704, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. He published eighteen practical books, sixteen controversial, and nine which he called poetical. Six are on baptism. His most celebrated pieces are his "Tropologia, or a Key to open the Scripture Metaphors," in two volumes folio, and his "Gospel Mysteries unveiled, or an Exposition of all the Parables." He has, indeed, heaped together everything which he could collect; and it requires judgment in the reader to separate what is good from what is fanciful and worthless;

but still we are very much indebted to him, for doing so fully and so well, what no Englishman had done before. Both these performances are still in request.

CHARLES MARIE DE VEIL, D.D.

He was of the seed of Abraham. His parents, who lived at Metz, in Lorrain, trained up their son in the Jewish religion. In early youth, he was converted to the Christian faith by the famous Bossuet. This change so enraged the father, that he attempted to put his son to death. The convert, escaping his fury, applied himself diligently to study, became a preacher, and, besides other dignities, was appointed a professor in the College of Anjou, and graced with the title of doctor of divinity. The Catholics in France thought it would do honour to their own cause, and essential injury to the Protestants, to employ a converted Jew in the confutation of their tenets; and De Veil was engaged to write against them. But on examining the principles of the Protestants, he found truth where he imagined there was nothing but error; and determining to embrace the Protestant faith, he quitted France, and all his preferments, escaped secretly into Holland, and there renouncing his connexion with Rome, associated himself with the Dutch Presbyterians. He came over to England, and was very cordially received by Compton, Bishop of London, Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and other eminent divines. He was admitted into the clerical office, and became chaplain to a noble family, and tutor to the children. But he did not continue long in the communion of the established church. In consequence of reading the writings of the Baptists, and conversing with their ministers, he became a member of a Baptist

church. He was then chosen pastor of a small Baptist society in Gracechurch-street (the former minister of which had renounced his principles, through fear of persecution); but as he spoke the English tongue very imperfectly, it may naturally be supposed that he was not a popular preacher.

His dereliction of the church of England robbed him of all his former friends, except Dr. Tillotson. The Baptists, however, raised him a small salary, which he enjoyed during the remainder of his life. In addition to this, he practised physic for his maintenance, and was accounted skilful. He died in the beginning of the eighteenth century. His character is thus drawn by Crosby: "He was a grave, judicious divine, a good chronologist, a great historian, a skilful grammarian, and such a pious good man, that he brought an honour to the cause in which he was embarked*." He wrote a commentary on the first two gospels, compiled from the writings of the fathers and other divines, and interspersed with some remarks of his own, in defence of the dogmas of Popery. When it was republished in England, with considerable alterations, the Popery was thrown out. While he continued in the English establishment, he published a commentary on the Song of Solomon; and an exposition of the minor prophets. After he became a Baptist, he wrote his commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, in which he argues most strenuously in favour of his newly-adopted system. It was first published in the Latin tongue; but, in the

* Dom. Calmet, whose communion he had forsaken, says, "Charles Marie de Veil was a canon regular, &c., afterwards he abjured the Catholic faith, became an Anabaptist, and so died in the beginning of the eighteenth century, having gone through all religions without having any."—Dict. vol. iii., p. 458, edit. 1732.

following year, in English, and as the translator appears to have been imperfectly acquainted with our language, it is supposed to have been done by himself. In all his commentaries, he makes a very happy use of his superior knowledge of the Jewish rites and usages. It is astonishing, that neither De Veil himself, nor those into whose communions he successively passed, ever thought of employing his talents and energies for the conversion of the Jews*.

MR. DANIEL BURGESS.

Almost all the leaders of the dissent were steady luminaries, which moved regularly in their orbits, and shone with equable splendour; but we have now to record the name of one who forms an exception to the general character, who, from wise and benevolent motives, shot into an eccentric course, where he rather blazed than shone; and while the coruscations of his genius offended the eyes of some, he shed on the minds of others that heavenly ray which exalted him to the honours of those, who, having turned many to righteousness, shine as the stars in the kingdom of their Father.

Daniel Burgess was born in 1645, at Staines, near London, where his father was then minister. His

* Another learned man of the same family, and of the same nation, named Louis de Compeigne de Veil, appeared in England, about the same time. He early embraced the Romish religion, which he afterwards renounced for the Protestant faith, and came over from France, where he had been the king's interpreter for the oriental languages, to England, in 1679, and entered into the communion of the established church. He published several books, chiefly relating to Jewish literature, which are said to display considerable learning. Dr. Tillotson was likewise his particular friend and patron.—Birch's Life of Tillotson, pp. 79, 80.

Wolfius, in his "Bibliotheca Hebraica," says, that Louis de Veil was the brother of Charles, and had his name from Louis IV. standing godfather, and the rite being performed at Compeigne, one of the royal palaces.—Crosby, vol. iii. Tillotson's Life.

son, the subject of this memoir, was, at nine years of age, sent to the Westminster school, and entered commoner of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, when he was but fifteen. Here he continued with the character of a close, hard student, till he was of bachelor's standing; when he and several others, entertaining conscientious objections to some things required previously to taking their degree, chose rather to forego the honour, than submit to the imposition.

Having left the university, he was residing with his father, when he was invited to be chaplain, first to Mr. Foyl, of Chute, in Wilts; and afterward to Mr. Smith, of Tedworth, where he was tutor to that gentleman's son. Mr. Baxter's great friend, the Earl of Orrery, Lord President of Munster, took Mr. Burgess to Ireland. In order to strengthen the Protestant interest, the earl established at Charleville, a school, of which he nominated Mr. Burgess head master, who, while here, superintended also the education of the sons of many of the Irish nobility and gentry. He was afterwards chaplain to Lady Mervin, near Dublin; in which city he was ordained as a presbyterian minister, by Drs. Harrison and Rolls, and some others of that denomination. Here he married a Mrs. Briscoe, by whom he had a son and two daughters.

After a residence of seven years in Ireland, his father, growing infirm, sent for him home. The times were now dark and tempestuous, but he had the courage, says his biographer, Matthew Henry, to put to sea in a storm, when very few Non-conformists did. His abundant labours were crowned with great success, at Marlborough and its vicinity.

The affectionate attachment which multitudes felt for his apostolic ministry, found its sure counterpoise in the hatred and opposition of those, who like bats, wink and scream at the light which they cannot bear. Being once apprehended for the enormous sin of preaching the word of God to those who were perishing in ignorance, he was committed to the common jail at Marlborough, where, having nothing to sit or lie upon, he was obliged to walk his cell all night, till his friends, the following day, contrived to put a bed in at the window. He was denied a copy of his commitment; but, after some time, he came out upon bail, though he again suffered much persecution.

The notoriety of his character having rendered him so much the mark of the persecutors, that his usefulness was impeded in the country, he went to London, where he was destined to labour with peculiar success. As the Dissenters, soon after this period, began to enjoy religious freedom, full scope was allowed to his ardent zeal; which now flamed out with those happy singularities, which, in London, could not fail to attract the attention of a multitude. His hearers were soon very numerous, and among them there were several persons of distinction, who took for him a place of worship in Brydges-street, Covent-garden. Being situated in the neighbourhood of the theatre, and surrounded by many who are fools enough to mock at sin and religion, he frequently had among his hearers those who came only to make themselves merry at the expense of religion, Dissenters, and Daniel Burgess. His undaunted courage, his pointed wit, and ready elocution, turned this to great advantage; for he frequently fixed his

eyes on those scoffers, and addressing them personally, in a lively, piercing, and serious manner, was blessed to the conversion of some.

As the tide had now turned, and the London Gazette invited the Dissenters to lay their claims before the commissioners, whom the king had appointed to award them damages for the injuries done them, in the times of persecution, Mr. Burgess was advised, by a person of distinction, to punish those who had outrun even the violence of the law in their conduct towards him. But he nobly declared, that he had freely forgiven them, and should never think of revenge.

He laboured nearly thirty years in London, with unrivalled popularity and great success. But having been obliged to quit the place of worship which they had hired, his congregation built a new one, into which they had scarcely entered, before such differences arose among them, that a large party left him, while the building was yet encumbered with a heavy debt. To this was added another trial; for Sacheverell's mob broke into the meeting-house, demolished the windows, and tearing out the pulpit and pews, burned them in Lincoln's-inn-fields. These afflictions, particularly the differences between him and his people, abridging his usefulness, embittered his last days. That which sunk his spirits and broke his strength, says Mr. Henry, was, not so much his working, as his not being allowed to work. In a private letter, he thus speaks: "I have never inclined to express my feelings to any friend, save Emmanuel only. But it must and shall be said, to the praise of never-failing grace, all my nights are not sleepless; all days are not restless; every friend is not

found faithless ; nor are all enemies found useless ; all disturbed studies are not tasteless ; all the disadvantaged sermons have not proved fruitless ; all the various troubles have not been comfortless ; content, I hope, as Luther said, to let our names be vilified, so that his name may be hallowed and glorified."

At last, the vital lamp, which had blazed amidst tempestuous winds, and lighted many to the realms of eternal day, began to expire. During some months, in which he languished under the decay of nature, his breast was the temple of peace, his countenance spoke the joy of his heart, and his voice, which had often instructed men how to live, now taught them how to die. At the commencement of his last illness, he said to his friends, " Well, if God has any more work for me, he can repair these decays, and will do it ; and if not, blessed be God, I have a good home to go to, and this is a good time to go home ;" alluding, probably, to the storm which had gathered over Dissenters, at the close of Queen Anne's reign. He added, " If I must be idle, I had rather be idle under ground, than above ground." The evening before his death, a friend that came to see him said, " I fear there will be a storm ;" to which he replied, " But God will house some of his children first. Well ! here is all trouble at the gate, but when got through it, no more, no more." On seeing him faint away, a near relation shrieked out, in alarm and anguish ; so that when he recovered again, he asked what was the meaning of that shriek ? and on being told that it was because they thought him dying, he replied, " What if I had, where was the need of that confusion ?"

Thus cheerfully he fell asleep, in January, 1713, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

Those who knew him intimately, pronounce him a most pleasant man in conversation, ever employing his wit and learning to the most pious and edifying purposes. He was as much esteemed by eminence and worth as he was maligned by ignorance and malevolence. His study was his paradise, which he never left but to do some good office. He often said, that he chose rather to be profitable than fashionable in his preaching, and that he thought it cost him more pains to study plainness than it did others to study fineness; for he was willing to go out of the common way, to lead sinners into the right way. "That's the best key which best fits the lock, and opens the door; though it be not a silver or golden key." He frequently used homely similitudes, odd turns of expression*, and striking stories, such as abound in the sermons of Bishop Latimer, which by some were turned to his reproach; but many who acknowledged that they went to hear him to divert themselves with his quaint terms, were pierced with such convictions of guilt and danger, as led them to embrace the refuge which he so earnestly recommended. The anecdotes of these occurrences are very numerous, and still furnish the social intercourse of

* It is related, that, preaching on the robe of righteousness, he said, "If any of you would have a good and cheap suit, you will go to Monmouth-street; if you want a suit for life, you will go to the Court of Chancery; but if you wish for a suit which will last to eternity, you must go to the Lord Jesus Christ, and put on his robe of righteousness." In the reign of William, he assigned a curious motive for the people of God, who were the descendants of Jacob, being called Israelites,—the reason is, because God did not choose that his people should be called Jacobites.

Christians of different communions, with an agreeable union of entertainment and instruction.

Many tales, however, were invented by his enemies, to blast his usefulness; and as he was indefatigable and successful in his labours, he was industriously misrepresented by those who hated the cause for which he was willing to be counted a madman, or a fool. A gentleman, who was once led by curiosity to hear him, could scarcely be persuaded that he had really listened to the genuine Daniel Burgess, whose ludicrous fame had allured him thither; for, said he, "I never heard a better sermon in my life."

He, indeed, abhorred the presumption of many, who have outraged his manner, and thus become pulpit Merry-andrews, by venting the levities of the moment; for he studied his sermons with great care, being as distant from the conceit of such as suppose that, if they speak with animation, they may pour forth what they never thought of before, as from the mistake of others who imagine, that if a discourse be well prepared, it is of no consequence how dull and soporific the delivery. He constantly studied to direct the attention of his hearers to the grand discoveries of divine mercy, which constitute the essence of the Gospel; and these he is said to have preached, with a simplicity and force, which, when combined, display a mind of the highest order, and form a preacher most eminently calculated for usefulness. He was far from obtruding, at the throne of the Eternal, the quaintness and familiarity with which some dare to joke with the God whom they profess to adore, but was ever serious and solemn in his prayers, without the slightest tinge of drollery. It

is, however, difficult to give a verdict on his mode of preaching, which has since had many imitators, both in the establishment and among Dissenters. Much allowance should certainly be made for natural temper, which will show itself whenever a man feels perfectly at home; so that when we see ministers, who glory in the title of queer fellows, and who set the table in a roar, stand in the pulpit like statues of ice, while their hearers betray alarming symptoms of the fatal lethargy which precedes being frozen to death, who will give them praise for their contemptuous jokes on droll preachers? Or who will think that man in earnest, who feels the touch of the pulpit like that of a torpedo, who is all quicksilver every where else, but dull as lead in the rostrum; animated when discoursing on the prices of stocks, or the speed of a race-horse, and inspired with the genius of slumber, when discoursing to heedless mortals on approaching death, judgment, and eternity? Yet these are the men who delight to profane the ashes of such preachers as Daniel Burgess!

On the other hand, it must be owned, that in the footsteps of one who, by natural eccentricities, wins uncommon attention, and by nobler singularity is crowned with eminent success, follow crowds of extravagant imitators, who, aiming to excite what their model has studied to repress, degrade the sacred Majesty of divine truth, and sink the pulpit below the stage. The serious consideration of the subject conducts to this conclusion, that where it is natural and not forced, the coruscations of wit, which will sparkle through all efforts to restrain it, will impart a vivacity to preaching that may awaken attention, fix stings in

the memory and conscience, and rather help than hinder usefulness. But where it is indulged through levity, and still more where it is mimicked, to court a grin, it will grieve the Holy Spirit of God, shock the pious, disgust the judicious, and leave the pulpit buffoon to the vile honours and rewards of making men laugh where they ought to weep, and furnishing them with food for religious jokes and gossip, where they ought to have provided themes for devout meditation and prayer.

GEORGE TROSSE, M.A.

A very respectable family in Exeter gave birth to George Trosse, in the year 1631. His talents displayed themselves at school, and gave him a superiority to his fellows. Being designed for mercantile life, he was sent over to France, to learn the language of that country. Freed from restraint and discipline, at a time when they are most necessary, while he learned to speak French, he became a proud and vicious youth. Returning home, at the end of a year, he stayed some time in London, not much to his improvement; and then was sent to Portugal, where he remained several years in the house of an English merchant. Every Protestant, on his arrival at that country, was obliged to deliver up his Bible and all his religious books, to persons appointed by the government, who retained them in their custody, till his departure. Living without the Scriptures, or the smallest vestige of public worship, what but an increase of iniquity could be expected? Having disagreed with the gentleman under whose care he was placed, he came back to England, a profane, intemperate young man.

A continuance in the same course of life at home injured his constitution to such a degree, that he became deranged, and remained in a very deplorable state for many months. On his recovery, he soon returned to his former courses; and a second derangement was the consequence. His reflections on the criminality of parents, who send children abroad in their early years, and expose them to the most powerful temptations, merit the consideration of every father and mother. His own mother tasted the bitterness of anguish, from the conduct of her unhappy son. But his parents were violent against the Puritans, and all their ways. "When but a child," he says, "I imbibed a more than filial affection for Cavaliers, the liturgy, and the priesthood; and a mortal hatred to Puritans, and their preaching, and their manner of life; and I used to jeer at their praying by the Spirit."

During his first derangement, serious thoughts had entered his mind, but they vanished with the restoration of health; his second calamity brought them back, and he ever afterwards appeared to be a new man. This was in his twenty-fifth year. Feeling an earnest desire to be useful to the souls of men, he entered at Pembroke Hall, Oxford, and continued there a student, of more than ordinary diligence, for seven years.

The restoration introduced to the offices and honours of the universities a new description of men, whose character and conduct he did not approve. Piety, which had reigned there before, was discouraged, and its votaries treated with ridicule and contempt. He therefore resolved to leave the place. After the most mature examination of this subject, he decided in favour

of non-conformity, and it must be allowed that worldly considerations could have had no influence on his choice.

Returning to his native city, he found his friends all strongly attached to the new ecclesiastical order of things, and was constrained to bear among them the inconveniences of singularity. He soon began to preach in private houses; and, being much approved, was, after some time, prevailed on to be ordained. The service was performed in Somersetshire: Joseph Alleine, whose praise is in all the churches, presided on the occasion; and two others were ordained at the same time. From this period, he preached privately to a select society, every Lord's-day; dispensed the Lord's Supper to them, every month; but still attended the parish church, at the stated seasons of worship. Being a Dissenter, he possessed some advantages over the ejected ministers; as several of the laws, which bore with a severe weight on them, did not attach to him. During Charles's indulgence, he officiated openly; but when it was withdrawn, he returned to his former practice. In the beginning of James's reign, he was seized at a conventicle, and confined six months in prison. When the revolution broke the sword of persecution, he became a stated preacher; and, the same year, was chosen to succeed Mr. Hallett, as one of the dissenting ministers in Exeter.

From that time, he laboured most abundantly in the work of the Lord. He was a hard student. The number of hours which he spent in his library would frighten many ministers in the present day. During the severest cold of winter, he never had a fire in his

study. The same thing is mentioned of Dr. Annesley. What iron bodies must men have had in that day! It was a singular advantage, which the great scholars and divines, at the time of the reformation and the succeeding age, possessed over the modern men of straw.

His singular eminence in piety, and the uncommon fervour of his devotion, must humble ordinary saints. Every month, a whole day was spent in meditation and prayer; and every week, he had his appointed hours for extraordinary and special supplication. By the frequency of his kneeling, and continuing long in that posture, his knees, says the biographer, were become "brawny and corneous." We are not to wonder, if one who lived so near to God, and conversed so frequently with him, appeared in the pulpit like a man of God, and spoke with an authority and weight far beyond all the rules of mere human eloquence. His discourses were full of evangelical truth, directed to the conscience, and delivered with fervour; they were likewise exceedingly frequent. His superior attainments, both in the gift and grace of prayer, crowned the whole of his services in the sanctuary. With what ardour of soul, what earnestness of intreaty, what divine oratory, did he pour out his soul to God, and draw the hearts of the congregation upwards with his own to heaven!

In the private duties of his office, he was as exemplary for his diligence. He spent much time in visiting the sick, and conversing with them about eternal things. To the poor he was a compassionate friend; and, as God had given him abundance, he was exceed-

ingly liberal in supplying their temporal wants. In every relation, domestic, civil, and sacred, he shone as an eminent pattern of Christian virtue.

Full fifty years he lived, as eminent for piety and zeal, as he had been before for impiety and excess. At last, his merciful dismissal into the joy of his Lord arrived, on the 11th of January, 1713. It was the Lord's-day; he had been preaching, and, on his way home, was seized with a fainting fit. When he was a little recovered, a friend, deeply affected with his situation, exclaimed, "Why did you preach when you were so ill?" "A minister," he replied, "should die preaching." When they had carried him to his house, he put himself into a posture for prayer, and expired. He was in the eighty-second year of his age.

JOSEPH STENNETT.

This excellent man was born at Albington, in 1663. Edward Stennett, his father, by espousing the cause of parliament in the civil wars, incurred the severe displeasure of his relations; and, by his principles, as a Dissenter, afterwards exposed himself to many and painful sufferings. He was a man of eminent piety; and, though a minister, practised as a physician, for the support of his numerous family.

His son Joseph, trained up from childhood in the ways of religion, was early brought to the saving knowledge of the truth. The following evidence of this was found among his papers, after his death:—"Oh God of my salvation, how abundant was thy goodness! Oh invaluable mercy! Thou didst season my tender years with a religious education, so that I sucked in the rudi-

ments of Christianity as it were with my mother's milk, by the gracious admonitions and holy discipline of my godly parents. This was an antidote sent from heaven against the corroding poison of sin; this made conscience speak, while my childish tongue could but stammer; this is a branch of thy divine bounty and goodness, for which my soul shall for ever bless thee."

Having gone through a course of classical education at Wallingford, he applied himself to the French and Italian tongues, became a critic in the Hebrew, studied the liberal sciences, and made considerable progress in philosophy. Quitting the country for London, he employed himself, for five years, in the education of youth. By the solicitations of his friends, he was at last prevailed upon to appear in the pulpit; and, preaching a lecture occasionally at a meeting-house in Devonshire Square, he was taken notice of by a congregation of Seventh-day Baptists, who met there for worship, but afterwards removed to Pinners' Hall. They had, some time before, lost their valuable pastor, Francis Bampfield, who ended his days in Newgate, for the testimony of Jesus. Being of the same sentiments, as to the duty of observing the seventh day of the week as the Christian Sabbath, he accepted their invitation, and was ordained in 1691. Though their outward circumstances were such, that they could not do much towards the support of his family, he could never be induced to leave them; but continued their faithful and affectionate pastor to the day of his death.

Besides his labours among his own people, he usually preached to other congregations, on the first day of the week. His biographer says, "it was his practice to

carry into the pulpit some short hints only, consisting of the heads of his discourse, and references to texts of Scripture. He committed things only, and not words, to memory; those were abundantly supplied in the course of speaking."

His eminent worth was noticed by the public; and he had considerable offers of preferment in the established church. But to him, conformity had no charms: "I bless God," said he to a friend, "I can hardly allow these things to be called temptations; because I never felt in my mind the least disposition to enter into any treaty with them."

Afflictions wore down his earthly frame, which was at best delicate and feeble. Feeling the day of his departure draw near, he called his children around him, and gave them such counsels as might be expected from the departing breath of so wise and good a man. His latter end was peace, and his hopes of future blessedness, lively and firm. To a friend, who made inquiry as to the state of his mind, under the pressure of bodily distress, he answered, "I rejoice in the God of my salvation, who is my strength and my God." He departed this life, the 11th of July, 1713, in the forty-ninth year of his age.

Mr. Stennett displayed a taste for poetry, of which his metrical version of Solomon's Song, and his sacramental hymns, furnish no unfavourable specimen. His friend, Mr. Tate, the poet laureat, bore this honourable testimony:—"Mr. Stennett has the happiness to be a good poet, without being a slave to the Muses." His thanksgiving sermon, for the victory at Blenheim, was so much admired by Queen Anne, that she ordered him

a gratuity out of the privy purse, with thanks for the pleasure she had received in the perusal.

Like many of his dissenting brethren, he was a strenuous friend of civil liberty; and no wonder that those who had felt the lash of despotism prized the sweets of freedom, and regarded it as one of the first of earthly blessings*. They had learned its value, from its loss, in the reigns of the Stuarts; and they had learned it still more in William's reign, from the enjoyment of its numerous privileges, both in civil and in sacred life, in the house of God, and in their own.

By his talents, Mr. Stennett rendered himself exceedingly useful to his denomination, and was very highly respected by them. In their public concerns, he was usually called to take the lead. The address, which the Baptist ministers delivered, as a body, congratulating King William on his preservation from the assassination plot, was drawn up and presented by him. Though a peaceable man, he was engaged in disputes with the Quakers, the Anti-Trinitarians, and the Non-jurors. He had likewise a controversy with Mr. Rassen on baptism. After his death, his works were collected, and published in five octavo volumes, to which is prefixed an account of his life.

As a mark of the esteem in which he was held by his brethren, they fixed on him as the most proper person to write the history of the Baptists; and, with much intreaty, pressed the work upon him. He under-

* The advocate for arbitrary power may be freed from his mania, in the space in which the sun runs his annual course. Confinement in a damp and gloomy dungeon, not unfrequent scourgings, and repeated and heavy fines, will, in less than a twelvemonth, complete the cure. He will come out the friend of liberty and of mankind.

took it, formed his plan, which was very extensive, and, for some years, was employed in collecting materials. But his growing infirmities prevented him from carrying his purpose into execution. Mr. Benjamin Stinton, successor to Mr. B. Keach, afterwards turned his thoughts to the same subject, but, like Mr. Stennett, left the work unfinished. Had either of them completed his plan, more justice would have been rendered to the subject, and more honour to the body, than was done by the person into whose hands it afterwards fell.

MATTHEW HENRY.

He was born at Broad Oak, in Flintshire, of the renowned Philip Henry, who received this "fruit of the womb as his reward," about two months after he had offered the sacrifice of his living at the altar of Christ and conscience. Matthew, like many other eminent persons, was a child of infirm health, and early displayed a mind too vigorous and active for the frame which it inspired.

So soon were his parent's prayers answered, that, at ten years of age, he had the deepest convictions of the evil of sin, by hearing his father preach on Psalm li. 7: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." He afterwards concluded, that when eleven years old he was converted to God, and blessed with the Divine favour. When he was thirteen years of age, he wrote in his diary, "It is to-day thirteen years since I was born, and though I was sickly, the Lord hath preserved me ever since. Lord Jesus, I bless thee for thy word, for good parents, that I was taken into covenant betimes in

baptism, that I have had a good education, that I am thine." Hearing his father preach on the nature and growth of grace, as compared in Scripture to a grain of mustard seed, he was much affected; and having relieved his anxious mind by laying it open to his pious parent, he came running to his sister, saying with great gladness, "I hope I have received that blessed grain of true grace; and though it is very small at present, it will come to something in time."

That the child of such a father should early love to imitate preaching, and wish to be a minister, is not wonderful; but of those who watched his puerile essays, some wondered at the wisdom and gravity which they displayed, while others expressed their fears to his parents, lest he should be too forward; but the father replied, "Let him go on, he fears God, and designs well, and I hope God will keep him and bless him." It was the charitable practice of Mr. Philip Henry to take some young men into his house, to assist them in preparing for the universities, for which he long retained so strong a partiality, that he used to advise his young friends to go thither, though he expected they would then conform. Mr. William Turner, afterwards Vicar of Walburton, in Essex, was in the house of the father when Matthew Henry began to apply to grammar, so that he who was pupil to the parent, was sub-tutor to the son. But Philip Henry resolved to send his son to a dissenting seminary for the ministry. It may be thought, indeed, that he who taught his daughter Hebrew, at seven years of age, had little occasion to send his son from under the paternal roof, in order to prepare him for the church; but the father

was a public-spirited man, and he found that his frequent labours in the ministry were incompatible with the constant attentions which education requires.

After having been at the seminary of Mr. Doolittle, young Mr. Henry was induced, by the influence of friends, to remove to Gray's Inn, in order to study the law. But, true to his original purpose, keeping his eye on the glory of the Redeemer, as his polar star, he quickly returned to the work of the ministry. His first public services were at his father's residence, where he received the most pleasing testimonies of acceptance. Being afterwards invited to spend a few days with a friend at Nantwich, in Cheshire, he preached on the words of Job, "With God is terrible majesty," which produced the most striking and delightful effects.

He was now invited to Chester, where he preached at the house of Mr. Henthorne, which laid the foundation of the church of which Mr. Henry was many years the faithful pastor. But being recalled to London, he found that the king was issuing out licences to empower the Non-conformists to preach; on which he wrote to his father, that Mr. Faldo, an Independent minister, had preached publicly at the meeting-house in Moorfields, both morning and afternoon, to many hundreds of people, who were delighted at the reviving of the work. This led him to prepare seriously for his future office: and, in a private paper, entitled "Serious Self-examination before Ordination," he lays open a soul, evidently formed by the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry. It seems that it had been suggested to him, that he might possibly obtain episcopal ordination, without submitting to the oaths and declarations

to which Dissenters objected; but, after having examined the question with great seriousness, he determined rather to be ordained by Presbyters. As the ministers, to whom he applied, were very aged and cautious, he was ordained with great privacy.

Mr. Henry was welcomed at Chester as his worth deserved, and was successful in raising a large congregation. After a time, three of his sisters were married in the same town. He was also blessed with a wife worthy of such a husband; but, as a flower, too lovely for this desert, she was quickly transplanted to paradise. Her mother, who at first opposed the match, but afterwards came, with her husband, to reside in Mr. Henry's family, said "she believed God had sent her daughter there, to prepare her for heaven." She died within a year and a half of their marriage, shortly after bringing into the world a daughter, whom the bereaved father presented to Mr. Philip Henry's arms for baptism, with these affecting words,—“Although my house be not now so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make me not to grow; and according to the tenour of this covenant I offer up this child to the great God, as a plant out of a dry ground, desiring it may be implanted into Christ.” At this scene, which touched all the springs of nature and of grace, a large congregation burst into tears. By his next wife, the daughter of Robert Warburton, Esq., of Grange, he had several children.

In his ministry, it is said, that his constant work on the Lord's-day was, to pray six times in public, to expound twice, and preach twice. His two public ser-

vices seem to have been fully equal to three in the present day. He went through the whole Bible, by way of exposition, more than once : and how much he excelled, as an expositor of Scripture, the church of Christ well knows. The list of subjects on which he preached is in print, and displays a comprehensive mind, anxious to declare the whole counsel of God ; but, in his private notes, he says, “ I find myself most in my element when preaching Christ, and him crucified, for the more I think and speak of him, the more I love him.”

Eager to seize every opportunity of usefulness, he diligently visited the prisoners in the castle of Chester, where his benevolent compassion and zeal introduced him to some very affecting scenes. But he confined not his labours to Chester ; for he was the life of the dissenting communion through all that country, and weekly preached in the adjoining towns and villages. After having refused several invitations from churches in London, he took the pastoral charge of the church which Dr. Bates first gathered at Hackney. He has left, on record, his reasons for quitting the first scene of his labours, where he had preached nearly five-and-twenty years, where he had three hundred and fifty communicants, and probably a thousand hearers ; a people, of whom he said, with a heavy heart, at parting, “ they love me too well.”

He commenced his pastoral labours at Hackney, by expounding the first chapter of Genesis, in the morning, and, in the afternoon, the first of Matthew ; as if beginning life anew. That he removed to the vicinity of London, to enjoy, not ease, but labour, was evident ; for his zeal blazed forth with new ardour, to fill his

new and enlarged sphere. He devised additional modes of usefulness, preaching not only at Hackney, but in London also, early and late, on the same Sabbath. He often preached lectures, every evening in the week, and sometimes two or three on the same day; so that, his biographer says, "if ever any minister in our days erred in excess of labours, he was the person." But one of the principal motives which led him to London, was to be able to print the remaining volumes of his exposition.

He now drew near to the goal for which he panted. To alleviate the pains of separation from his friends at Chester, he had promised to visit them every year; and on his return from one of these visits, he was taken ill at Nantwich, where he said to his friend, Mr. Illidge, "You have been used to take notice of the sayings of dying men, this is mine,—that a life spent in the service of God, and communion with him, is the most pleasant life that any one can live in this world." He joined his venerable father in the assembly of just men made perfect, June 22d, 1714, in the fifty-second year of his age.

The news of his death spread among the Dissenters the deepest grief; and even those who loved not the communion to which he belonged, owned that it had lost its brightest ornament. He has left behind him, in his works, a library of divinity, which supersedes all eulogium on his character. His mind was not, indeed, formed for metaphysical abstraction, or elegant sublimity; nor was his pen celebrated for those splendid ornaments which charm the fancy, nor those vigorous strokes which thrill through the soul; but he possessed

a peculiar faculty, which may be called a religious *naïveté*, that gave to well-known sentiments an enchanting air of novel simplicity; while his style abounded with antitheses, which attic taste would sometimes refuse, but which human nature will ever feel and admire. The mere plans of his sermons and expositions contain more vivid, lucid instruction, and less deserve the name of skeletons than the finished discourses of many other divines. The knowledge of Scripture which he possessed was immense, so that his composition is a tissue of texts, often admirably illustrative of his subject. For his printed exposition of the Scriptures, he prepared in a manner which at once unveils the secret glory of his own personal religion, and accounts for the unrivalled excellencies of the work. In his private notes, he charges himself to ask of God such a style as might convey the knowledge of Scripture in the true spirit of Scripture itself; for such a recollection of parallel texts as might make the Scripture its own expositor; and for those pointed turns which would fix themselves on the memory, like nails fastened in a sure place. "God granted him that which he requested." His volumes contain the result of the most erudite researches, concealed under the veil of language which condescends to the simplest minds. The learned leisure of colleges may have produced works which rank higher in the esteem of scholars; but Matthew Henry still stands without a rival, as an expositor of Scripture, for the edification of the church of God. A rabbinical fable affirms, that the Creator left spaces in the heavens unadorned with stars, that if any pretender to deity should arise, he might be chal-

lenged to prove his godhead by filling up the vacancy : it was so ordered, that Mr. Henry should terminate at the Acts of the Apostles, his valuable exposition, which as been completed by those who have followed his manner, but not with equal steps*.

SECT. II.—*Lives of Private Christians.*

RICHARD CROMWELL.

To fill the annals of the church with the history of its ministers, is to create a tiresome sameness by the uniform livery of office, and to deprive those who have been called the laity of the honourable notice to which they are frequently entitled. But among those who have not ascended the pulpit, where can a more important character be found than he who has filled a throne? While the subject of the succeeding memoir is thus distinguished, he was so perfectly free from all share in the transactions which led to his elevation, that his history may be contemplated with dispassionate curiosity.

Richard Cromwell was born at Huntingdon, October the 4th, 1626. He was the third son, though at length the eldest surviving child, of Oliver the Protector, who was, at the birth of this son, living in obscurity, which gave little promise of his future greatness. Richard completed his education at Felsted, in Essex, where

* See his life, first written by Mr. Tong, but since, far more ably, by J. B. Williams, Esq., L.L.D., of Shrewsbury; and prefixed to an edition of Henry's Exposition, in 3 vols. royal octavo.

he enjoyed the inspection of his mother's father, Mr. John Boucher. While the nation was convulsed with the civil wars, which raised his father to a throne, young Richard was admitted, in his twenty-first year, a member of the society of Lincoln's-inn. It is asserted, that here he spent his time, as is too customary at the inns of court, not in studying the law, but in gratifying youthful lusts. If he loved the company of the dissolute, it is no wonder that he became the companion of the cavaliers, with whom, it is said, he used to drink the king's health, saying, "Here is to our landlord." When Charles was condemned to die, Richard Cromwell threw himself on his knees at his father's feet, to intercede for the royal life. But Oliver was not to be melted by tears, and he seems not to have entertained at that time the highest opinion of this son, who was living in inglorious ease, while his younger brother Henry, was fighting by his father's side, and rising to posts of trust in those perilous times.

At the age of twenty-three, Richard married Dorothy, the eldest daughter of Richard Major, Esq., of Hursley, a village midway between Winchester and Romsey, Hants, where he afterwards enjoyed a peaceful retreat on the estate which was his wife's portion. The father, in negotiating this match for his son, says, "Mr. Major hesitated on account of some ill reports, but I gave him such answers as were next at hand, and I believe to some satisfaction. I know God has been above all ill reports, and will in his own time vindicate me." Complaining that his son exceeded his income, the Protector says, "I grudge him not laudable recreations, nor an honourable carriage, yet I scruple

to feed this luxurious humour. God forbid his being my son should allow him to live not pleasingly to our heavenly Father, who hath raised me out of the dust to what I am! I cannot think I do well to feed a voluptuous humour in my son, in a time when some precious spirits are bleeding and breathing their last, for the good and safety of the rest."

From the year 1655, he seems to have lived more agreeably to his father's wishes. He was then made first lord of trade and navigation; and, in the following year, was elected to represent in the senate the county of Hants. When the Protector resigned the chancellorship of Oxford, his son Richard was chosen to that office, and about six months after, removed Dr. Owen, who had been vice-chancellor five years, and appointed Dr. Conant*, rector of Exeter College, to be his successor.

Though Richard is usually supposed to have been dissatisfied with his father's dangerous elevation, he discovered no particular reluctance to ascend the vacant throne, to which he was appointed by his father's will, and being proclaimed protector in the year 1659, he received the most flattering addresses from all parts of the empire. He was in his thirty-third year, when he grasped the British sceptre, which, in Oliver's hands, was a rod of iron that made Europe tremble, but in the hands of his son became a feeble reed, unequal to the tempests of the times. The political history of his reign belongs not to these pages, which have only to record his moral and religious character. His first

* The following compliment was paid to him by a pun upon his name:—
"Conanti nihil difficile."

proclamation was for encouraging godly ministers, in which he maintained the grand principles of toleration, and gave a promise of that regard for equity and genuine liberty, which his future conduct never belied. For suffering himself to be so soon and so easily hurled from his throne, he has been ridiculed and condemned as despicably pusillanimous. But Mr. Howe, who was his chaplain, asks, "how could he be a weak man, when, upon the remonstrance that was brought from the army by his brother-in-law Fleetwood, he stood it out all night against his whole council, and continued the debate, till four o'clock in the morning, having none but Thurlow to abet him, maintaining that, to dissolve the parliament, would be both his ruin and theirs?" Richard, however, determined that, as his path to the empire was unstained with blood, he would not defile his seat with it, nor shed one drop to support the throne of the Cromwells. At the Restoration, he prudently retired to the Continent of Europe, and resided for some time at Geneva. But, when he perceived that the English had again changed their mind concerning Charles, he returned, in the year 1680, to his native country. He saw the nation expel the Stewarts, and call in William to be their second Cromwell. Richard's son, who bore the name of his grandfather Oliver, offered to raise a regiment of horse, for the service of William in Ireland; but the prudent monarch declined the offer.

The ex-protector resided at Cheshunt, in Hertfordshire; but there is also an unbroken tradition of his living, in his latter days, at Hursley, under the name of Clark, and attending at the independent meeting-

house in Romsey, where what was called Cromwell's seat, was lately removed, at the erection of a larger place. This was, probably, after the death of his only son Oliver, in the year 1705, in the forty-fifth year of his age, without issue, by which the manor of Merdon, at Hursley, devolved to his father. But the daughters of Richard Cromwell, supposing the estate became their own, commenced a suit against their father, who appearing in court a venerable old man of eighty, was highly revered by the judge, who allowed him a chair in court, where, after having pronounced a verdict in his favour, he severely reproached the daughters, for not allowing their parent to enjoy his rights in peace, during his few remaining years. He was blessed with remarkable health, and would gallop his horse many miles, at the age of fourscore. In his last illness, he said to his daughters, "Live in love, I am going to the God of love." He died July 13th, 1712, in the eighty-sixth year of his age.

He is said to have been a fine person, of polished manners, and, while protector, was respected for judgment and talents, as his speech to his parliament was superior to that of his chancellor Fiennes, who was himself esteemed an able man. Though represented by some as destitute of religion, he is declared by others to have been "a very worthy person, of an engaging nature and religious disposition, giving great respect to the best of persons, both ministers and others." He maintained a constant correspondence with Mr. Howe, and when that excellent man was upon his death-bed, Mr. Cromwell visited him. They had much serious conversation, and, amidst many tears, which

they both shed, on the review of the divine conduct towards them and the church, they parted in a solemn, affecting manner. Burnet says, "As Richard Cromwell had done hurt to nobody, so nobody did ever study to hurt him, by a rare instance of the instability of human greatness, and of the security of innocence*." The same writer says, "He pretended to be an Independent;" but as he retained the same profession, when he not only had no further occasion for the pretence, but was even exposed to odium on this account, it may be safely concluded that his judgment approved the sentiments of the Independents. He must, therefore, have enjoyed high satisfaction in living to see the opprobrium thrown upon his family, removed, and to behold the triumph of toleration, which has been called the idol of the Independents.

LADY HEWLEY†.

The influence of females on society is often great in proportion as it is secret; for the prime mover in human affairs, like the heart in the body and the main spring in the watch, must often be secured from interference and attack under a shield of many folds. The philosophical historian who would record, not merely events, but their causes, will frequently have to show that, while men were the resolute actors, women were

* Burnet, vol. i. p. 83.

† In the first edition of this work were given memoirs of two distinguished females, Lady Lisle and Mrs. Gaunt, who fell martyrs to the principles of the Dissenters. But as they died just before the Revolution, and are not unrecorded in the annals of our country, it has been thought proper to substitute for them the memoir of one who ought not to have been omitted in the first period of our history, during which she died.

the secret prompters of the deeds which have changed the face of the world. Henrietta of France has been pronounced, both by friends and foes, the fatal counsellor that led Charles I. to the block. The Stewarts were, indeed, always under the influence of women or priests.

But in the church of God, women may at once act as an under current that directs the movements of others, and by the strength of their character and the ardour of their piety, exert an influence open and avowed, while they are mighty in proportion as they are gentle and meek. The advocates of a Salic law, who would most rigorously exclude the sex from interference with politics, will confess, that, being "fellow heirs of the grace of life," women have an equal interest in the sanctities of religion. The Scriptures, therefore, are true to nature, when they give pre-eminence to pious females, and render the Hannahs, the Marys, the Annes, the Elizabeths, the Priscillas, and the Phœbes personages of importance in the history of religion, and inferior only to the Samuels, the Peters, the Johns, the Pauls, and the Timothy's.

The noble army of martyrs includes many a sacred amazon, and, as the apostle mentions, among the heroes of the faith, the "women who received their dead raised to life again," so the annals of the primitive church contain an Ursula and her attendant virgins, as also the records of our reformation have given immortality to Anne Askew. Many were the instances of female heroism which the History of the Dissenters could present to the admiration of posterity; but the martyrdoms of Lady Lisle and Mrs. Gaunt occurred before the revo-

lution; and of those who adorned the more quiet period of our history, our limits permit us to mention only one solitary specimen, in which an individual must stand for a genus.

Dame Sarah Hewley, as she is designated in contemporary legal documents, was the daughter and heiress of Robert Wolrich, Esq., Bencher of Gray's Inn. She was born in 1630, and was married to Sir John Hewley, but at what time does not appear. Her husband was member of parliament for the city of York, during the twenty-ninth and the two following years of the reign of Charles II.

Lady Hewley bore to Sir John two sons, Wolrich and John, but as they both died young, she was left at liberty to employ her ample patrimony in those pious and benevolent works in which she took delight, and which claim for her an honourable notice in this volume.

Sir John had, besides his house in York, a seat at Bell Hall, four miles distant. He is not known to have been himself a Non-conformist, except the following extract from a letter, written by the celebrated Oliver Heywood, should be admitted as proof of that fact:—

“ November, 1679.

“ After preaching at Alverthorpe, I rode towards York. In that city, I waited on Lord Clifford and Lord Fairfax, and lodged at night with Sir John Hewley. The next day, I visited many friends, and dined at Sir John Hewley's, with Lord Clifford, Sir Gilbert Gerherd, Sir John Brooke, and others. The morning afterwards, I was called upon to preach in Lady Hewley's chamber.”

Sir John, who seems to have been older than his lady, died, at the advanced age of seventy-eight, Aug. 24th, 1697.

Lady Hewley was such a one as the apostle pronounces "a widow indeed," spending her remaining days in exercises of devotion and works of benevolence. She attended the dissenting meeting-house in St. Saviour's Gate, York, where Dr. Colston, a very superior man, was the first pastor of a congregation which continues to this day; though doctrines are now preached there far different from those which Colston and the first Dissenters proclaimed. Towards the building of this place of worship Lady Hewley contributed, and there is said to be yet remaining, opposite the pulpit, not only the seat which she occupied, but a great chair that was appropriated to her use, during public worship, in her declining years.

Towards the close of a life of eminent devotion and abounding charity, Lady Hewley gave, by a deed of trust, the whole of that property which she inherited from her own family, to benevolent and pious uses, chiefly "for the relief of poor and godly preachers of Christ's holy gospel, in the northern counties of the kingdom," but a certain portion of it to be expended in educating "preachers of the holy gospel." This affords a gratifying proof of the wise solitudes felt by the earliest Dissenters to provide a succession of well-educated ministers for the churches which had separated from the establishment. The property, which consists chiefly of estates near Knaresborough, is said to produce a yearly revenue of nearly four thousand pounds.

After this disposal of her property, Lady Hewley had but little to express in her will, but that piety which there breaks forth in such sentences as these,—“ My soul I commit to my Redeemer, to be washed in his most precious blood.” The same sentiments she expressed on her dying bed ; for when one mentioned her numerous charities, she replied, “ Ah, they are all well, if washed in the blood of Christ.” After a widowhood of thirteen years, she died, August 23d, 1710, at the great age of eighty.

She chose for her funeral sermon, a text expressive of her views of human life. Eccles. i. 2 ; “ Vanity of vanity, saith the preacher ; all is vanity.” This she had mentioned to her pastor, Dr. Colston, whose funeral sermon is so characteristic both of himself and his theme, that by giving a copious extract from the discourse, we shall present to the reader a picture not only of Lady Hewley, but of the dissenting ministry and laity of that day.

“ These were the things which this elect lady, whose mournful funeral gave occasion for this subject, had in her eye. To prepare for these was her daily work—to foretaste these was her daily food ; and since God answered her prayers, in turning her eyes from beholding vanity ; her steady and uniform course in religion, shewed the glorious prize she was reaching to. The early education she had among those of the first rank, raised her spirit to such a height, as made work for humbling grace. And the remains whereof were happily turned to that glory, honour, and immortality, which lead to eternal life. This virtuous person spake her own experience, when she gave me this text, and

uttered with her mouth what was inscribed on her heart. But what her modesty intended for a shroud to her virtues, will set them in a fairer view, and will apologise for my endeavours to rescue somewhat of her praises from the grave, which her self-abasing soul would have buried with her. Her self-denial was wonderful in one of her quality and estate, her age and weakness. She would let no fleshly ease hinder her duty. She might have spared herself a hundred times, without the sin of indulgence. Her extreme abstemiousness, and most regular way of living, procured her long life, and the church of God a long blessing. Forwardness and impatience are so natural to old age, to tedious, wasting infirmities, that it was admirable to find her so free from either. Her patience had its perfect work in dying agonies. She came often to ask me about them, and expressed her fears she should not get well through them, upon which I advised her not to trouble herself with such fears beforehand; but only prepare, and God would carry her through them; and so he did; for an entire resignation ran through the whole conflict. How often did she break out, 'O pray, pray!' She lived praying, and commended it to others with her dying breath. Her piety towards God commends itself to your imitation in many instances, especially in her affection to divine ordinances. Nothing could keep her from the public worship of God, but absolute inability. Her house was a church of God, for his uninterrupted worship in it. She daily retired for secret devotion, even when, by reason of her weakness, it was not safe for her to be left alone. Her charity was universal—the most illustrious ex-

ample in our age. She has not left her equal behind her. She was a mother in Israel, to whom many had recourse for wise counsel, and by whose means many children were nursed up for heaven. Multitudes will feel the loss of her. If her private charities were all known, they would amaze you! Her silver streams ran along the vallies to water the adjacent parts. Many that knew not the spring head, when they find the stream dried up, will know the reason when they hear Lady Hewley is dead.

“Ministers are often partial, but persons’ good works do not flatter them. I appeal to her noble alms house, built nine or ten years before she died, where she expended in that time, about fifteen hundred pounds. I might mention her other charities in this city, and her several schools not far from it.

“After all, she thought herself an unprofitable servant, and that none had more need of the merits of the Saviour to justify and save her. Her finishing, and most ardent breathings, were into his bosom. ‘Come Lord Jesus, come quickly,’ and they are now met to part no more. Heaven had often heard of her before, by the multitude of petitions that daily crowded thither, but now heaven has received her longing, sanctified soul, and there she lives without pain and sickness, and without sin. There she sees, loves, enjoys, and adores her God and Saviour, as she would*.”

In the above extract, we have a specimen of the preaching of the earliest dissenting ministers, and a record of one of those who formed their flocks, one who braved the obloquy which at that time attended dissent.

* Dr. Colston’s Funeral Sermon for Lady Hewley.

Those readers who have been edified by the evidences of her evangelical faith, will regret to learn that her charity was afterwards directed into another channel, and employed to propagate and support Socinianism, in defiance of the known intentions of the donor.

END OF VOL. I.

INDEX.

	Vol.	Page
Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury	i.	58
Abergavenny, Academy at	ii.	541
ABNEY, SIR THOMAS	ii.	409
Academy at Northouram	ii.	529
——— Baptist, at Bristol	ii.	535
——— at Newport Pagnell	ii.	530
——— at Gosport	ii.	531
——— at Warrington	ii.	532
——— at Manchester	ii.	533
Addington, Dr. Stephen, dissenting tutor	ii.	522
Address of Dissenters to King William III.	i.	390
——— to Queen Mary	i.	393
——— to William on her death	i.	394
——— Dissenting Ministers to George I.	ii.	285—289
——— to George II.	ii.	293
——— to his Queen	ii.	296
Addresses to George III.	ii.	566
Agricola spreads Pelagianism in Britain	i.	6
Aikin, Dr., tutor	ii.	230
Alban, St., Proto British Martyr	i.	5
——— his body discovered	i.	13
Albans, St., Synod of, to check Pelagianism	i.	6
Alcuinus, his learning and usefulness	i.	12
Alfred	i.	14
America, an asylum for the Puritans	i.	65
Amory, Dr.	ii.	209
Anabaptists, Dutch, doomed to the flames	i.	48
Anglo-Saxons receive missionaries from Rome	i.	8
Antinomianism	ii.	303
Apostolical Constitutions	ii.	166
Arians burned	ii.	57
Arianism, its effects	ii.	251—252

	Vol.	Page
Arianism in Britain	ii.	166
——— during the Commonwealth	ii.	166
——— its prevalence in Exeter	ii.	305
——— by means of Pierce and Hallet	ii.	168
——— it spreads through Devon and Cornwall	ii.	170
——— the odium it brought on Dissenters	ii.	171
——— its termination in Exeter	ii.	175
——— its introduction into London	ii.	175
——— the division of the body of dissenting ministers on the question of Subscription	ii.	179
Arian Controversy—its rise in the University of Cambridge	ii.	166
Arians	ii.	165
Armagh See, founded by St. Patrick	i.	7
Arminianism favoured by Laud	i.	61
Arminian Controversy	ii.	500
Arthur, King	i.	8
Articles, the six	i.	35
Asaph, St.	i.	8
Ashworth, Dr. Caleb, tutor, removes the academy from Northampton to Daventry	ii.	525, 229
Associations among Dissenters	i.	380
Associations	ii.	282
———	ii.	565
Athelmus, first bishop of Sherbourne	i.	12
Austin and Benedictine Monks land in Kent	i.	9
Bacon, Roger, Franciscan Monk	i.	120
Badby, John, Protestant martyr	i.	29
Baptist Association	i.	388
——— General Baptist Association	i.	390
Baptists, their principles	i.	182
——— their history	i.	185—195
——— General, their Arminianism	ii.	259
——— Particular, their increase	ii.	259, 547
——— state of religion among them	ii.	321
——— General, their decrease	ii.	547

	Vol.	Page
Barnes, Dr.	ii.	533
Bartholomew's Day, 1662	i.	78
Bastwick, cruelly treated	i.	64
Bates, Dr.	i.	429
Baxter, Richard	i.	417
—— his reasons for the Christian religion	ii.	202
Becket	i.	17
Bede, the venerable, his homilies, his translation of John	i.	12
Belsham's Funeral Sermon for Priestley	ii.	516
Belsham, tutor at Daventry	ii.	525
Bendish, Mrs.	ii.	420
Benion, Samuel, M.D., dissenting tutor	i.	307
Bennet, Benjamin	ii.	346
Benson, Dr. George	ii.	587
Benson's Defence of Methodists	ii.	493
Berry, Mr. John, tutor at Homerton	ii.	520
Bishops and Liturgy, forced upon the Scots	i.	62
—— committed to the Tower	i.	86
Blount, Charles, Oracles of Reason	ii.	198
Boards of London Dissenting Ministers	ii.	284
Bogue, Dr., tutor at Gosport	ii.	531
Bohemians	i.	22
Bolingbroke, Lord	ii.	201
Boucher, Joan	i.	37
Bradbury, Thomas	ii.	401
Bradwardine, Thomas, opposes the Pelagians	i.	28
Bran, or Branus, the first British Christian	i.	2
Britain evangelized	i.	4
Britons retire into Wales	i.	8
Brown, Simon	ii.	369
Brownists	i.	48
Bryan, Dr. John, dissenting tutor	i.	319
Buckinghamshire, abounds with martyrs	i.	31
Bunyan, John	i.	461
Burder, Henry Foster, tutor at Wymondley	ii.	526
Burgess, Daniel	i.	477

	Vol.	Page
Button, Ralph, dissenting tutor	i.	335
Cæsar, his invasion of Britain	i.	1
Calamy's Nonconformists' Memorial	ii.	153
Calamy's Defence of moderate Nonconformity	ii.	154
Calamy, Dr. Edmund	ii.	366
Cambridge University, its liberality	ii.	340
Candour	ii.	305
Canute	i.	15
Caractacus	i.	2
Cardale, Mr., of Evesham	ii.	510
Carmarthen, Academy at	ii.	542
Cartwright, champion of the Puritans	i.	53
Cases, London	ii.	152
Cassiodore, his exhortation to shake off the yoke of Rome	i.	21
Celestius, a disciple of Pelagius	i.	6
Celibacy of Priests	i.	17
Chandler, Samuel	ii.	590
Charles V., Emperor	i.	33
Charles I.	i.	60
——— beheaded	i.	66
Charles II., profligacy of his reign	i.	75
——— his death and character	i.	83
Charlton, John, dissenting tutor	i.	317
Chauncy, Isaac, M.D., dissenting tutor	i.	313
Cheshire Association	i.	387
Chorlton, John, dissenting tutor	i.	317
Chubb, the Deist	ii.	201
Churches, dissenting—List of them	ii.	543, 544
Clark, William, tutor	ii.	539
Clarke, Dr. Samuel, his Arian book on the Trinity	ii.	161
——— Matthew	ii.	351
Claudia, mentioned by Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 21, a British Christian	i.	3
Cleveshoo, the council of	i.	13
Cole, Thomas, dissenting tutor	i.	331

	Vol.	Page
College, Countess of Huntingdon's, Trevecca and Cheshunt	ii.	541
College, Homerton	ii.	519
——— Hoxton	ii.	521, 522
Collet, John, Dean of St. Paul's	i.	32
Columba, St.	i.	9
Commonwealth, state of Religion	i.	71
Common Prayer, prohibited	i.	69
Conder, Dr. John, tutor at Homerton	ii.	519
Conformity, Occasional, Bill against	i.	274
Conformists' Plea for Nonconformity	ii.	152
Congregations, dissenting, List of	ii.	257
Constance, Council of, condemns Wycliffe	i.	31
Constantine, born in Britain	i.	5
Constantius, his gentle rule in Britain	i.	5
Controversies	ii.	135
——— on Dissent	ii.	135
Conventicle Act	i.	80
Corporation and Test Acts, application for their Repeal	ii.	478
Cox, Dr., his conduct at Frankfort	i.	43
Cradock, Samuel, dissenting tutor	i.	333
Cranmer	i.	36
——— burned	i.	41
Cromwell, Oliver	i.	70
——— his death and character	i.	73
Cromwell, Lord	i.	35
Cross seen by Constantine	i.	5
Crusade	i.	18
Cruso, Timothy	i.	467
Danes invade England	i.	13
Daventry Academy	ii.	525
David, St.	i.	8
Davis, Dr., tutor at Homerton	ii.	520
——— Benjamin, tutor at Abergavenny	ii.	535
Davies, Evan, tutor	ii.	226
Daubney's Guide to the Church	ii.	497

	Vol.	Page
Defoe, Daniel	ii.	416
Deistical Controversy	ii.	197
Delaune, a martyr to dissenting principles	i.	87
Densham, Joseph, dissenting tutor	ii.	217
Differences among the Reformers	i.	43
Dissent, reasons of	i.	88—152
——— controversy concerning it	ii.	490
Dissenting Ministers, Conformists	ii.	252, 253
Doddridge, Dr., tutor	ii.	228—387
Dodwell, Henry, his Christianity not founded in argument	ii.	200
Donald, King of Scotland, converted	i.	4
Doolittle, Thomas, dissenting tutor	i.	326
Druids	i.	2
Dunstan, the Monk, Archbishop of Canterbury	i.	15
Durham, College at	i.	70
Eames, John, dissenting tutor	ii.	216
Easter, question concerning the time of Celebration	i.	10
Ecclesiastics, exempt from civil jurisdiction	i.	7
Edmund's Bury	i.	13
Education for the Ministry, the method of conducting among the Dissenters	ii.	231
Edward the Confessor	i.	15
Edward VI.	i.	36
——— his Character	i.	38
Egbert, King of Wessex	i.	13
Ejected Ministers	i.	69
Elector Palatine	i.	58
Elizabeth, Queen	i.	42
——— her character and death	i.	51
Elpheg, a martyr	i.	16
Error, its influence among Dissenters	ii.	246
Ethelbert, king of Kent	i.	8
Ethelstan promotes the translation of the Scriptures	i.	15
Evans, Dr. John	ii.	364
——— Hugh, tutor at Bristol	ii.	536

	Vol.	Page
Evans, Dr. Caleb, founder of the Bristol Education Society	ii.	536
—— John, General Baptist tutor	ii.	540
Exeter Academy	ii.	527
—— Assembly	i.	385
—— its Declaration in behalf of the Trinity	ii.	179
Eyre, John, of Homerton	ii.	524
Faith, Sandemanian views of it	ii.	436
Fell, John, tutor at Homerton	ii.	520
Fire of London	i.	81
Fisher, Dr. Daniel, tutor at Homerton	ii.	520
—— Bishop of Rochester	i.	35
Flavel, John, dissenting tutor	i.	340
—— his memoir	i.	424
Fleming, Mr., tutor	ii.	224
Fletcher, John	ii.	505
—— his checks	ii.	505
Fletcher's Socinianism unscriptural	ii.	515
Fordyce, Dr. James	ii.	606
Forfitt, Benjamin	ii.	324
Foster, Dr.	ii.	398
—— Dr. James	ii.	203
Fox the Martyrologist	i.	48
Frankland, Richard, dissenting tutor	i.	297
Free Inquiry	ii.	305
Fund, Presbyterian	ii.	272
—— Independent	ii.	272
—— Baptist	ii.	272
Furneaux, Dr. Philip	ii.	597
Gale, Dr. John	ii.	339
—— Theophilus, dissenting tutor	i.	324
Gardiner, Colonel	ii.	133
General Baptists	i.	184
Gentleman, Robert, tutor at Carmarthen	ii.	535

	Vol.	Page
George I., his death and character	ii.	108
——— II., his death and character	ii.	134
Gerard	i.	18
German Confessors	i.	18
Germanus, a French preacher sent to oppose Pelagianism in Britain	i.	7
Gibbons, Dr. Thomas, tutor at Homerton	ii.	519
Gill, Dr., his influence	ii.	321
Glascok, Francis, dissenting tutor	i.	324
Goodwin, Thomas, dissenting tutor	i.	338
Gough, Strickland	ii.	247
Grafton, Duke of, his 'Hints'	ii.	491
Graham's review of Ecclesiastical Establishments	ii.	492
Gregory, Pope, sends missionaries to Britain	i.	8
Grew, Dr., dissenting tutor	i.	319
Griffiths, Vavasor	ii.	226
Grindal, Bishop of London, favours the Puritans	i.	46
Groteste, Bishop of Lincoln	i.	20
Grove, Mr, dissenting tutor	i. 304 ii.	208
——— his Character	ii.	208
Guise, Dr. John	ii.	618
Gunpowder Plot	i.	56
Hallet, Joseph, his controversy with the Deists	ii.	203
——— Joseph, tutor	i. 315 ii.	222
——— his conduct in the Arian controversy	ii.	179
Haliburton, his natural religion insufficient	ii.	202
Hall, Robert, tutor at Bristol	ii.	537
Hampshire Association	i.	387
Hampton Court Conference	i.	53
Harris, Dr. William	ii.	372
Hartopp, Sir John	ii.	407
Hawker, Dr., his sermons on the Divinity of Christ	ii.	515
Helena, St., wife of Constantine	i.	5
Henry I., Beauclerc	i.	17
——— IV.	i.	28
——— VIII.	i.	31

	Vol.	Page
Henry, Philip	i.	433
Heretics consigned to the flames	i.	29
Herbert, Lord, of Cherbury, his deistical works	ii.	197
Hill, Sir Richard, Apology for Brotherly Love	ii.	498
Hill, Thomas, dissenting tutor	ii.	226
Hiot, John, tutor	ii.	532
Hoadley's attack on Calamy	ii.	154
Hobbes, Thomas, of Malmesbury, his Leviathan	ii.	198
Hollis, Thomas	ii.	412
—— Thomas, Jun.	ii.	414
Hooper	i.	36
Horne, Bishop of Norwich, his sermon on Contend- ing for the Faith	ii.	514
Horsey, John, tutor at Northampton	ii.	526
Horsley, Bishop, his attack on Dissenters	ii.	494
Howe, John	i.	437
Hubbard, John, dissenting tutor	ii.	219
Hughes, Stephen, dissenting tutor	i.	342
Hughes, Joseph, tutor at Bristol	ii.	537
Hume, David	ii.	201
Huss, John, Wicliffe's Letter to	i.	27
Ilid, first missionary to Britain	i.	3
Independents	i.	167
—— their Principles	i.	165
—— their History	i.	171-182
—— their Increase	ii.	258, 546
Independency, favourable to Orthodoxy	ii.	316
Inte rregnum	i.	68
Introduction of the Gospel into Britain	i.	2
—— into Scotland and Ireland	i.	4
Iona, the Monastery	i.	9
James I.	i.	52
James II.	i.	84
—— his Declaration for Liberty of Conscience	i.	85
James, Stephen, dissenting tutor	i.	304

	Vol.	Page
Jardine, David, dissenting tutor	ii.	226
Jenkins, Jenkin, dissenting tutor	ii.	226
Jennings, John and David	ii.	227
Jennings, Dr. David	ii.	521
John, King	i.	19
John of Gaunt protects Wicliffe	i.	23
Jolly, Timothy, dissenting tutor	i.	300
Jones, Samuel, dissenting tutor	i.	341, 342
——— his academy removed to Carmarthen	ii.	225
Joep, Caleb, tutor at Bristol	ii.	535
Joseph of Arimathea, supposed to have introduced the Gospel into Britain	i.	2
Keach, Benjamin	i.	472
Kenrick, Thomas, tutor at Daventry, and at Exeter	ii.	528
Ker, John, M.D., dissenting tutor	i.	339
Kingsbury, Mr., his Defence of Dissenters, and Apo- logy for Village Preachers	ii.	494
Kippis, Dr. Andrew, dissenting tutor	ii.	521, 523
Knox, John	i.	43
Labours of Ministers	ii.	553
——— Dissenting Ministers	i.	361
Langford, Dr. William	ii.	595
Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury	i.	19
Lardner, Nathaniel	ii.	593
Lardner, Dr., his Inquiry concerning the Logos	ii.	511
Latham, Samuel, M.D.	ii.	227
Latimer	i.	36
Laud, Bishop of St. David's	i.	56
——— effect of his persecution	i.	65
Laurentius, successor to Austin	i.	11
Lavington, John, tutor	ii.	229
——— tutor at St. Mary, Ottery	ii.	528
Lectures, Lord's-day evening	ii.	262
Legacy, Sir John Gayer's	ii.	273
——— by Mr. Barnes	ii.	274
Leighton, Dr., his treatment	i.	64

	Vol.	Page
Liberty, religious, under George I.	ii.	76
————— II.	ii.	109
————— III.	ii.	461
————— state of, under William III.	i.	213
————— under Anne	i.	244
————— spirit of	i.	286
Lindsey, his objection to the Trinitarianism of the Church of England	ii.	514
List of Dissenting Churches	i. 358 ii.	257
Liturgies introduced by Dissenters	ii.	269
Liturgy revised	i.	44
————— forced upon the Scotch	i.	62
Lobb, Stephen, dissenting tutor	i.	323
Long Parliament	i.	72
Longland, his Complaint and Prayer of a Ploughman	i.	28
Lorimer, William, dissenting tutor	ii.	213
Lucius, a British King converted to the Christian Faith	i.	3
Lupus, a French preacher in Britain	i.	7
Luther opposed by Henry VIII.	i.	32
Mant, Dr., Attack on Dissenters	ii.	494
Mapez, Archdeacon of Oxford, his Satirical Rhymes against the Pope	i.	21
Marryat, Dr. Zephaniah, dissenting tutor	ii.	220
Marshall, Walter	i.	454
Mason, John	ii.	588
Martin Mar-Prelate	i.	49
Martyr, Peter	i.	36
Mary restores Popery	i.	41
Mathews, Marmaduke, dissenting tutor	i.	342
Maxentius, the Roman Emperor opposed to Constantine	i.	5
Mayo, Dr. Henry, tutor at Homerton	ii.	520
Merrivale, Samuel, tutor at Exeter	ii.	527
Method of education for the Ministry among Dis- sentrers	i.	343
Methodists	ii.	1
————— Arminian	ii.	24

	Vol.	Page
Methodists, Calvinistic	ii.	43
——— state of Religion among them	ii.	327, 549
Milton	i.	71
Missionary Society	ii.	578
Mode of preaching among Dissenters	i.	364
Monasteries, their uses	i.	17
Monk, General, restores the Stuarts	i.	75
Montague, Mr., his Appeal to Cæsar	i.	61
Moore, John, tutor	ii.	222
Moravians	ii.	63
More, Chancellor	i.	35
Moore, John, tutor	i.	315
Morgan, Dr., Moral Philosopher	ii.	200
Morton, Charles, dissenting tutor	i.	321
Motion for relief of Dissenting Ministers from Sub- scription Articles	ii.	465
Neal, Daniel	ii.	374
Newcombe, Henry, dissenting tutor	i.	316
Newton, James, tutor at Bristol	ii.	537
Nichols, Dr. William, Defence of the Church of Eng- land	ii.	155
Nonconformist Ministers, two thousand	i.	78
——— Jeremy White's List of sixty thousand sufferers for Dissent	i.	87
Number of Dissenters	i.	353
Oath of Passive Obedience and Non-resistance	i.	81
Oldcastle, Sir John, Lord Cobham, martyr	i.	30
Oldfield, Dr. Joshua, dissenting tutor	i.	320
——— at the Hoxton Academy	ii.	213
Olyffe's Defence of the Church of England	ii.	154
Orange, William, Prince of	i.	86
Ordination, Dissenting	i.	374
——— change of the Service	ii.	276
Orton, Job	ii.	599
——— his Letters	ii.	248

	Vol.	Page
Oswald, a Northumbrian chief	i.	11
Oswestry, Academy at	ii.	542
Outward State of Dissenters	ii.	243
Owen, Dr., Vice-chancellor of Oxford	i.	71
—— James, dissenting tutor	i.	305
—— Dr. John	i.	444
—— Charles, tutor	ii.	224
—— James, tutor	ii.	224
—— Hugh, dissenting tutor	i.	342
Owen's, Dr. John, Inquiry into the Nature of Evangelical Churches	ii.	151
Oxford University founded by Alfred	i.	14
Palladius sent from Rome to Scotland and Ireland	i.	7
Papal Interdict	i.	19
Paris, Van, a Dutchman, burnt	i.	38
Parker, Archbishop, his tyranny	i.	46
Parry, William, tutor at Wymondly	ii.	526
Parsons' Defence of Dissenters	ii.	496
—— Samuel, tutor	ii.	222
Patrick, St.	i.	7
Payne, John, dissenting tutor	i.	338
Pelagianism	i.	6
Pelagius, a Welchman, called Morgan	i.	5
Penal Laws suspended	i.	85
Perrot, Thomas, dissenting tutor	ii.	225
Phillips, Peregrine, dissenting tutor	i.	342
Pierce, Rev. James, of Exeter: he becomes an Arian by his acquaintance with Whiston; he preaches on the Divinity of Christ, at the request of his hearers	ii.	168, 169
Plague of London	i.	80
Polyglot Bible	i.	71
Pomfret, Samuel	ii.	341
Porter, Joseph, dissenting tutor	i.	316
—— his academy removed to Stratford on Avon	ii.	223

	Vol.	Page
Præmunire, Statute of	i.	22
Prayer Meetings	ii.	559
Presbyterians protest against Charles's Death	i.	67
_____ their Principles	i.	153—156
_____ their History	i.	157—165
_____ their decrease	ii.	258, 545
_____ Causes of the Error and Declension of	ii.	304
Presbytery first formed at Wandsworth	i.	48
_____ established	i.	66
Price, Dr. Richard	ii.	602
Priestley's Appeal ; his Institutes ; his History of Corruptions ; his Controversy with Horsley	ii.	512
_____ Address to Dissenters	ii.	490
_____ his Memoir	ii.	532, 609
Prynne, his cruel treatment	i.	64
Public Services among Dissenters	i.	373
Puritan Congregation detected	i.	47
Quakers, their Principles	i.	196
_____ their History	i.	202—212
_____ relieved from taking Oaths	ii.	113
_____ seek relief from Ecclesiastical Suits	ii.	128
_____ state of Religion among them	ii.	326
_____ their numbers	ii.	548
Rank of Dissenters	i.	359
Reading Sermons	ii.	263
Rebellion in 1745	ii.	132
Rees, Dr. Abraham	ii.	521
Reformation	i.	39
Regium Donum, or Parliamentary Grant	ii.	275
Relief to Dissenters	ii.	467
_____ Roman Catholics	ii.	471
Religion, state of among Dissenters	ii.	571
_____ at the end of Queen Anne's reign	i.	481
_____ under George I. and II.	ii.	299
Revolution, French	ii.	483

	Vol.	Page
Reyner, Edward, dissenting tutor	i.	340
Reynolds, Bishop of Norwich	i.	77
——— John, dissenting tutor	ii.	210
——— Thomas	ii.	361
——— Edward, dissenting tutor	i.	340
Ridgley, Dr., dissenting tutor	ii.	215
Riots against Popery	ii.	474
Robins, Thomas, tutor at Daventry	ii.	525
Robinson, Benjamin, dissenting tutor	i.	337
Rotheram, Dr.	ii.	207
Rotheram College	ii.	529
Rowe, Thomas, the Independent Preacher of West- minster Abbey	i.	326
Rowe, Mrs.	ii.	429
Ryland, Dr. John, tutor at Bristol	ii.	537
Sacheverell	i.	257
Salter's-hall, Controversy there concerning Subscription	ii.	177
——— propriety of convening this Assembly	ii.	193
Sandemanians	ii.	434
Savage, Dr. Samuel Morton	ii.	521
Saunders, Julius, dissenting tutor	i.	316
Sautré, a priest, consigned to the flames	i.	29
Saxons get possession of England	i.	7
——— persecute the Christians	i.	8
Schism Bill	i.	279
Seminaries	i. 290, 352 ii.	205
——— method of Education	i.	342
——— support of	i.	239
Sermons of Dissenters	ii.	264
Services, their public	ii.	274
Shaftesbury, Lord, his "Characteristics"	ii.	199
Shewell, Thomas, dissenting tutor	i.	320
Short, John, dissenting tutor	i.	315
Shower, John	ii.	331
Shuttlewood, John	i.	331
Sigebert, King of the East-Angles	i.	11

	Vol.	Page
Simpson, Dr. Robert, tutor at Hoxton	ii.	522
Singing introduced among the Baptists	ii.	265
Smith, Dr. John Pye, tutor at Homerton	ii.	520
——— Jeremiah	ii.	349
Society for promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor	ii.	323
Socinianism	ii.	577
Socinian Controversy	ii.	510
Spademan, John, dissenting tutor	i.	310
Stephen	i.	17
Steadman, Dr., tutor at Bradford	ii.	538
Stillingfleet's "Mischief of Separation"	ii.	149
——— answered by Baxter, Alsop, and Howe	ii.	150
Subscription, Controversy concerning it among Dis- senter in London	ii.	176
Sunday Sports	i.	56
Support of the Dissenting Ministry	i.	367
———	ii.	270, 561
Sutcliffe, tutor at Olney	ii.	538
Swedenborgians	ii.	447
Synod of Divines at Westminster	i.	68
——— at Salter's-hall	ii.	177
Tabernacle	ii.	54
Tallents, Francis, dissenting tutor	i.	304
Tatham, Dr., his Attack on Dissenters and Methodists	ii.	492
Taylor, Nathaniel	i.	469
Taylor, Dr. Abraham, dissenting tutor	ii.	218
Taylor, Dr. John, tutor	ii.	230
Tayler, John	ii.	420
Taylor, Dr., of Norwich, tutor	ii.	532
Taylor, Dan., General Baptist tutor	ii.	540
Terril, Edward, tutor at Bristol	ii.	535
Test Act	i.	82
——— failure of the Motion for its repeal	ii.	131
Theodore of Tarsus sent to fill the See of Canterbury	i.	11
Thomas, Samuel, tutor	ii.	226
Tilesworth burnt at Amersham	i.	31

	Vol.	Page
Tindal, Dr., Deist, his "Christianity as old as the Creation"	ii.	200
Tithes granted to the Clergy	i.	14
Toland, John, his "Christianity not Mysterious"	ii.	199
Toleration Act	i.	240
Tong, Mr., dissenting tutor	i.	320
——— his Memoir	ii.	357
Toplady, Mr., his "Historic Proof of the Calvinism of the Church of England"	ii.	504
Towgood, Matthew, tutor	ii.	223
——— Micaiah, tutor at Exeter	ii.	527
Towgood's, Micaiah, "Dissenting Gentleman's Letters to White"	ii.	159
Townsend, Mr. Charles	ii.	524
Translation of the Bible	i.	55
Trevisa, John, Vicar of Berkely, his Translation of the Scriptures	i.	28
Tucker's "Apology for the Church of England"	ii.	491
Turner, John, tutor at Exeter	ii.	527
Tyndale translates the Scriptures	i.	34
Veal, Edward, dissenting tutor	i.	336
Veil, Charles Marie de	i.	475
Village Preaching	ii.	580
Vincent, Thomas	i.	328
Vint, Mr., tutor at Idle	ii.	530
Vortigern, a British king	i.	7
——— calls in the Pagan Saxons	i.	7
Uniformity, Act of	i.	44
Union of Presbyterians and Independents	i.	381
Ursula, St., and Martyr	i.	5
Wadsworth, John, dissenting tutor	ii.	206
Wakefield, Gilbert, his Enquiry and Memoirs	ii.	515
——— Translation of the New Testament	ii.	516
Waldenses	i.	19

	Vol.	Page
Wales, Dissenters there	i.	397
Walker, John, tutor at Homerton	ii.	519
——— Joshua, Joseph, and Thomas, of Rotherham	ii.	529
——— Samuel, tutor at Northouram	ii.	529
——— George, tutor at Manchester	ii.	534
Warren, Matthew, dissenting tutor	i.	302
——— Thomas	i.	457
Watts, Dr. Isaac	ii.	380
Watts's "Humble Attempt"	ii.	157
Welbeloved, Charles, tutor at York	ii.	535
Welch, George, Esq.	ii.	530
Western Assembly, its efforts to check Arianism	ii.	170
Whiston revives Arianism in England	ii.	166
——— expelled from the University of Cambridge for Heresy	ii.	167
White's "Letters of a Dissenting Gentleman"	ii.	157
Whitlock, John, dissenting tutor	i.	340
Wickedness of the Britons	i.	7
Wickens, William, dissenting tutor	i.	323
Wilberforce, William, his Enquiry	ii.	516
Wilfrid, Archbishop of York	i.	11
William the Conqueror	i.	15
——— Rufus	i.	15
Williams, Joseph	ii.	417
——— Dr. Daniel	ii.	336
——— Dr. Edward, his "Essay on Equity and Sovereignty"	ii.	506
Willis, Ralph, cobbler of Gloucester	i.	81
Wilton, Dr. Samuel	ii.	623
Wolsey, Cardinal	i.	33
Woodhouse, John, dissenting tutor	i.	332
Woolston, the Deist	ii.	199
Woolaston's "Country Parson's Address to his Flock"	ii.	496
Wright, Dr. Samuel	ii.	377
Wycliffe	i.	22
——— his principles	i.	24, 25

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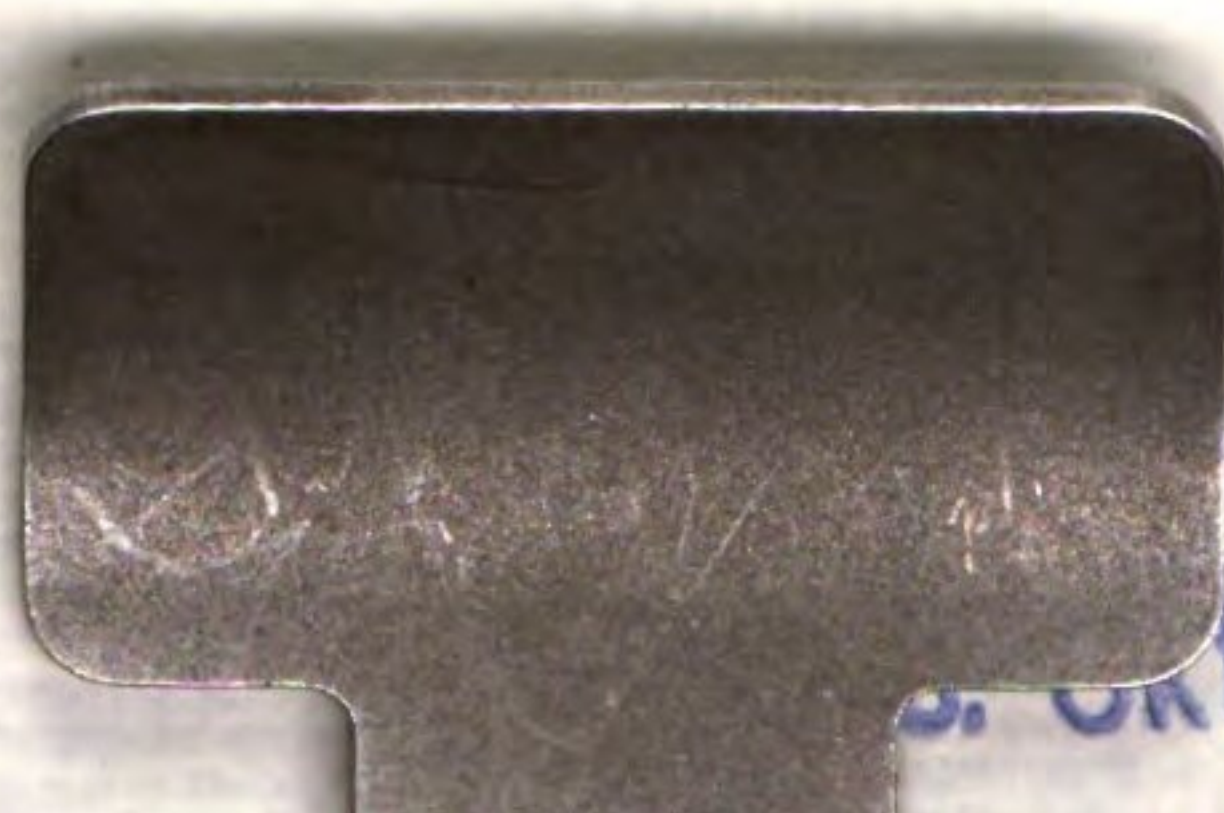
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